THE SECOND WORLD WAR

VOLUME ONE

BY

ALEXANDER M. REID



SUSIL GUPTA
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TO

MY MOTHER

It is regretted that, owing to war-time difficulties, certain typographic errors causing mis-spellings appear in the Introduction and elsewhere.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The last twenty-five years have witnessed the rise of Fascism to the zenith of its evil achievements, and now we see the crumbling of the Fascist edifice building by building. Its octopus-like tentacles embedded themselves and clung fast to any ground it occupied and its final destruction will depend upon the co-ordinated action of progressive forces. Much bloodshed would have been avoided and millions of lives saved if Europe had not been lulled into a drugged sleep of security and reaction by the smooth promises of the Nazi and other Fascist leaders and if the cry of farseeing progressive politicians had not been lost in the wilderness. One such warning came during the height of the Spanish War :—

"Democrats of France, democrats of Great Britain, democrats of the whole world, fight to organise the forces of peace; compel your governments, in conjunction with the great Soviet democracy, to build a barrier against the insolence of Fascism, to prevent it launching against mankind a wave of destruction and barbarity."

This dramatic appeal was made by a woman of Spain, Dolores Ibarruri, better known as La Passionara, whose great eloquence helped so much to put the case of Republican Spain before the world.

The Spanish Civil War was the tessting ground for the second Great War. The country was divided between progressive elements on the one hand and Fascism on the other. Europe and the world were warned by people like La Passionara that if Fascism won, the world would soon

be faced with another colossal struggle, that in barbarity and destruction it would far outclass any other war mankind had ever seen. But such warnings were in vain—Germany and Italy were able to pour munitions and men to the support of Franco, so Fascism won. And fresh from this triumph the Axis prepared for the real show-down. Fascist aggression in Europe by total warfare therefore did not start on September 1st, 1939, but years earlier—first in small ways, then with the Italians' unwarranted attack on Abyssinia, Franco's rising in Spain and Mussolini's murderous invasion of Albania.

The object of this book and of volumes to follow is to trace the trend of the present war but it is also necessary to deal with some of the events leading up to it. Therefore in this Introduction I shall touch briefly on several salient factors which paved the way for the present bloody struggle.

The space at my disposal is too limited to deal with the early manœuvres of Hitler and Mussolini in their fight for power, and that chapter is at any rate too well known to students of contemporary history. Suffice it to say that the stage was set early in 1935 for Mussolini to test out all he had been working for in the Mediterranean. For years he had threatened and blustered that he would make a move to extend the Italian Empire—but where ? So far as colonial possessions were concerned, Italy had come badly out of the first World War and everybody else had got most of the territory round the Mediterranean that really mattered. But Fascist countries must expand or burst and Italy, with probably the highest birthrate in Europe at that time, had to find somewhere for her surplus sons to go to. Abyssinia was decided upon—it was the only place left. It was however not a very suitable country to colonise, and was not the sort of land to bring quick results, as its mineral and other

deposits were of very doubtful value. Mussolini, it is said, was strongly advised against the adventure by his economic experts, but he had to go on, for he had no option in the matter.

Britain and Italy had for long had rival interests in Abyssinia and to check the other, Italy, backed by France, was instrumental in getting Abyssinia into the League of Nations in 1923. But this "thoughtfulness" on the part of the Italians recoiled in their own heads for when war broke out Abyssinia, as a member, was able to appeal to the League, and sanctions were applied against Rome.

Italy seriously lacks raw materials and the great majority of her population is engaged in agriculture. Under Fascism that population steadily increased and was all the time fed on the boasts of Mussolini that he would give his country a "place in the sun" which his surplus countrymen could colonise. And to keep their jobs, dictators must fulfil (at least to a certain extent) their boasts and promises. The Italian people, as the world knows, are by nature slow to exert themselves and be it said of Mussolini, in the development of his country, he made his people work—but not in the ways of peace. He was determined to make his country a power and the only way he could support his boasts was by the establishment of an army and navy, the likes of which the Italians had never seen. But it is no use building up a huge army and great munitions if you have no use for them and so Mussolini had to look about him to see where he could best use them. To win Italian support in the last war Italy was promised certain spoils which she never got and of this point Mussplini made the most.

As I have said, Britain and Italy had both counter interests in Abyssinia. Both Powers had had certain "spheres of influence" even in the nineties of last century

but these spheres were not to the liking of Italy and to settle the question once and for all, was it not better, Mussolini would argue, that the Italians take the whole lot? Another important point was that much of the dictator's policy had been built up in glorifying the Italian nation. In that he did not have much in the way of history to work on—he had even to go back as far as Roman days to try and persuade the Italians that they were still a militarist nation. And so far as Abyssinia was concerned he had a heavy score to settle—the massacre of the Italian forces at Adowa in 1896. So Abyssinia which was not a particularly valuable prize was the only one to seize and early in 1935 Mussolini started the heavy concentration of troops in his adjacent colonies of Eritrea and Somaliland. Germany watched with keen interest while Britain and France looked on anxiously, the former in particular in view of the vital concern she felt for her interests in North Africa and the safety of the road to India.

During the hectic summer of 1935 desperate efforts were made by Britain and France to persuade Mussolini not to go on with the venture and when it became evident that he was determined, the League of Nations stood up to the supreme test. If Mussoolini attacked sanctions under the League Covenant would have to be applied, but of what sort? With the Suez Canal under British control, Italy could be very effectively hampered in her designs, but that would almost certainly mean war and Britain and France were not prepared to go to war over Abyssinia. Therefore economic sanctions were pressed for at Geneva but of rather an anomalous sort—for instance oil did not appear in the embargo—and Mussolini was able to embark on his Abyssinian adventure on October 2nd, safe in the knowledge

that he could annex the country without any very serious inconvenience.

Then came the famous Hoare-Laval plan which raised a storm of protest against Baldwin's government and caused a deep sense of sympathy for the Abyssinians, who were being driven back with all the might of modern armour and also the use of poison gas. On Sunday, December 8th, it appears that Hoare, the then Foreign Minister, met Laval in Paris and decided that Italy might be given a large share of Abyssinia to stop the war. And Hoare went so far as to send a message to the British Minister in Abyssinia to ask him to use "his utmost influence" on the Emperor to give "careful and favourable consideration" to the proposals. As the news gradually leaked out there was a storm of protest and indignation throughout Britain and eventually Hoare had to resign. Meanwhile the Italians were pressing on—they made remarkable progress and in May 1936, Mussolini proclaimed the annexation of Abyssinia. The League had been defeated and Fascism shouted in triumph.

Even many of those that had cursed Britain's policy sighed with relief that this deplorable affair was at an end, and vainly thinking that Mussolini had been at last satisfied, they sank back into tranquillity once more. But two months had hardly passed when the headlines of the world's press carried news of yet another war—Franco had risen in Spain.

Spain, the most decadent of all European countries, had long been ripe for an explosion. When King Alfonso fled in 1931 he left behind him a legacy of years of misrule. The land had been in the possession of a ruling class that treated the people little better than serfs. The landlords—some of them owning vast stretches of territory—ignorant, lazy and arrogant, kept their workers in a state little better than slavery. Illiteracy was rampant—to the tune, in fact, of

45 per cent. Only three sections mattered in the country—the landed aristocracy, the army and the church. Each one was as corrupt as the other. When Alfonso left the revolution was bloodless and there was formed the Republic under the leadership of middle-class intellectuals, men of high ideals but little governing sense. Stormy years followed in which Spain's new leaders drew up excellent plans for a new order but they only remained on paper and were not properly put into practice.

February 1936 saw the formation of the Popular Front Government and also outbreaks of lawlessness all over the country. Like its predecessors, this government was full of good intentions but did not know how to put them into practice. And the revolutionaries were moving fast behind the scenes till suddenly the garrisons rose in many parts of Spain on the morning of July 18th. But they were by no means successful everywhere and in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Malaga and Bilbao in particular the people also rose and attacked the revolutionaries. An amazing thing had happened—to the surprise of their opponents and also to interested observers abroad, particularly in Italy and Germany, the people were at last really asserting themselves, and civil war broke out on a grand scale.

It should be emphasised at this point that General Franco, aristocrat and successful soldier, who was to become leader of the revolt after two of his superiors had been killed, was not a Fascist in the true sense of the word—to begin with—in fact he laughed at the idea and in this connection it is interesting to recall that *ten days after* the start of the war he declared in a newspaper interview—"This movement is not Fascist; it is Spanish and nationalist—Fascism is ridiculous in Spain, ridiculous—" Why then was it that he changed his tune so soon? The reason was that he could not get sufficient

support from the Spanish people. He had of course the aristocrats, the officer class, part of the national police force or Civil Guard, monarchists, important sections of the church, and the *Falangistas* or Fascists and some industrialists. But they were not enough for him to fight the resistance that had so unexpectedly sprung up and so he had to bring the Moorish troops from Morocco and men of the Spanish Foreign Legion (to whom Franco was a popular hero) but even that was not enough and he had finally to accept help in men and munitions from Italy and Germany. But if to start with Franco was not a Fascist he must always have had the instincts of one, for soon in his treatment of innocent people his name was to stink among the progressive minded peoples of the world. Another important point to remember is that on the other side in the Government when the war started there was not even a Marxist. It was certainly progressive and Leftist in character but it was only when the war had got under way that more Leftist elements entered the Government. But when Franco accepted Fascist assistance and then Russia lent what assistance she could, the war became really a struggle between two ideologies. Apart from the extreme Leftist elements, the Government were supported by the vast majority of the peasants and workers, most of the intelligentsia and the middle-class. The Republican Army had been robbed of most of the officers but with remarkable swiftness, a people's army, led by the people, arose and only overwhelming superiority in modern armaments on the other side and lack of supplies to their own robbed them of final victory.

Before dealing with the vexed question of non-intervention let us first consider the state of opinion in Europe when the Spanish War broke out.

For many, particularly in Britain and France, it took a long time to realise the significance of the struggle, especially

in view of the fact that Russia was little understood at the time, there being a constant dread of "The Red Menace," with the result that when the USSR became actively associated with the Government side, the man-in-the-sreet, for the most part, listened to the outpourings of the Rightist press that tried to persuade one that Franco was some sort of crusader who was out to "save" Europe from the Bolsheviks. When that gallant group of volunteers—many of whom were Englishmen—banded themselves together to form the International Brigade and save Madrid, few realized their intense feelings for the future of the world that prompted them to leave their jobs and their homes and risk wounds and death or slow torture in one of Franco's prisons—they realized that if he won, Fascism would get an additional important foothold in Europe. It was only really when news began to trickle through of the frightful atrocities that were being inflicted upon the Government soldiers and more so on the civilians, that it was at last realized that here was total war in all its frightfulness. One read of the mass murder of civilians after the capture of a town or village, the ruthless bombing by German and Italian planes of places not prepared for aerial attack; and one also heard of the outpourings of ruthless scoundrels such as General Don Gonzalo Queipo de Llano who howled over the Seville Radio that "Red women" would be turned over to the Moors—one girl for twenty Moors—while once he gloated, after the massacre at Badajoz, where 4000 people were slaughtered in the bull-ring, that—"Colonel Yague followed my instructions—and the result was admirable." As the war increased in violence and gradually the Republicans were driven back, the atrocities perpetrated by the Fascists increased and so it was realized throughout Britain and France that here was Fascism in war-time with a vengeance.

And what of the attitude of the British and French Governments ?—that can best be explained if we consider the Non-Intervention Agreement which was one of the greatest farces of modern times. In the first place the general attitude of the both Governments was almost similar. They did not like the idea of a wholly Fascist Spain—for both it could completely change the balance of power in the Mediterranean, but there were very powerful elements in both countries that held up their hands in horror at the idea of a "Bolshevik" Spain and would rather have anything than that—and above all the idea that the Spanish war might develop into a world struggle, especially involving Germany, was abhorred by the vast majority. But in the midst of hopeless indecision it was felt that something had to be done if for no other reason than to keep the war from spreading. Therefore the Non-Intervention Agreement was conceived which would place an embargo on the shipment of men and munitions to both sides. But long before it could be put into practice the Axis had been giving all-out aid to Franco; progressive elements in France were helping the Government to some extent and far-off Russia was doing what she could, but for obvious reasons that was not a great deal and the result was that the Republicans were badly the losers.

It took five months to hammer out some sort of an agreement and during that time Italy and Germany were sending the utmost help they could to Franco. Then when an agreement was at last reached the real farce started—detachments of the German and Italian fleets guarding important parts of the coasts of Spain and doing all they could to help the aggressors. Then came the attacks from the air and from submarines on neutral vessels plying even outside Spanish waters and at last the Italians started to boast openly of their troops' victories over the Government forces—though

they did not make much of the overwhelming defeat they suffered on the Guadalajara from at Brihuega!

During 1937 reaction trimphed in France and the Pyrenees were closed against Spain for trade. The naval blockade was also at its height, so the Republicans were caught in a trap, while Franco continued to have men and munitions poured in from Germany and Italy. The Democracies looked on and watched the annihilation of the people of Spain, and felt remote and detached. Not even was the Government moved when La Passionara came to France in December, 1937, and issued grave warings with such words as: "We know that in Spain the future of Europe is at stake—" and again: "We want to spare French women the boundless grief of the mothers, wives and sisters of Spain before whose eyes Fascist machine-guns mow down their children, brothers and husbands—" and: "But if, owing to the cowardice of those in whose hands the fate of Democracy lies, the Gemran and Italian Fascists continue to dispatch munitions and troops against us, if at the same time our frontiers remain closed, if the naval blockade continues, if, owing to all this, our Republic is destroyed, then, people of France, do not forget that you, too, will be in immediate danger. What good will the Maginot Line be then? None whatever! Danger will come then, not only from Germany, but also from the Pyrenees." France was unabashed and taking no notice of these warnings the Government sold Spain to the Fascists and prepared the way for the Fall of France.

Thus the war dragged on till the Republicans, constantly weakened by lack of supplies, were gradually driven back on all fronts and with the surrender of Madrid the bloody struggle came to an end in March, 1939. Then it was that the Axis made no secret of their share in the war—the famous

(or rather infamous) Condor Legion was feted in Berlin while the Italian Government openly stated that their airmen had made 86,420 flights over Spanish territory, dropping more than 11,000,000 kilograms of explosives in 5,318 bombardments.

With the conclusion of hostilities in Spain, Italy was fresh for another adventure—Albania, which she attacked without the slightest provacation on the morning of Good Friday, 1939, and overran with little difficulty. The leader of this little kingdom was King Zog. After wooing Yugoslavia he then turned over to Italy and by the Treaty of Tirana in 1926 Albania to all intents and purposes became an Italian colony. Money was poured into the country by Rome, Italian officers were sent to reorganise the Albanian Army, but eventually Zog quarelled with his friends—he wanted complete independence—and instead he was finally overwhelmed by an army many times the size of his own. Mussolini licked his chops at this easy loot.

And that very briefly sums up the three wars that established Fascism—or at least the Italian part—in Europe; Hitler was heavily engaged all the time with his nefarious transactions elsewhere.

Hitler, arch-liar and cheat, can best be summed up by a few of his "promises" between the years 1933 and 1939. They are interesting to recall in the light of present-day events. Here are some:

> The first and best point of the Government's programme is that we won't lie and we won't swindle. —*Berlin, February 10, 1933.*

> Germany, France, and Poland will continue to exist. Germany wants nothing that she is not ready to to give to others. . . .

No fresh European war is capable of putting something better in the place of the unsatisfactory conditions which exist to-day. . . . . The outbreak of such madness without end would lead to the collapse of existing social order in Europe. . . . . The German Government are convinced that to-day there can be only one great task, and that is to assure the peace of the world. . . . . The German Government wish to settle all difficult questions with other Governments by peaceful methods. They know that any military action in Europe, even if completely successful, would, in view of the sacrifice, bear no relation to the profit to be obtained. . . . .

Germany will tread no other path than that laid down by the Treaties. The German Government will discuss all political and economic questions only within the framework of, and through, the Treaties . . . .

The German people have no thought of invading any country.—*Berlin, May 17, 1933.*

On October 14 Germany left the League of Nations.

The National-Socialist racial idea and the science underlying it does not lead to scorn or contempt for other nations, but rather to the natural respect for the life and character of other people. It frees foreign political activity from any attempt to dominate foreigners in order to rule them or to incorporate them as a mere numerical mass in one's own nation. . . . The new German Reich has fundamentally no other wish in its attitude towards other peoples and States than to live in peace and friendship with them. We are convinced that it must be again possible in this world to talk over

differences in the lives of nations without always at once thinking of a resort to force . . . .

Germans and Poles must reconcile themselves as to the fact of each other's existence. It has seemed to me necessary to demonstrate by an example that it is possible for two nations to talk over their differences without giving the task to a third or a fourth. . . .

The assertion that the German Reich plans to coerce the Austrian State is absurd and cannot be substantiated or proved. The assertion of the Austrian Government that from the side of the Reich an attack would be undertaken or planned I must emphatically reject . . . . The German Reich is always ready to hold out a hand for a real understanding, with full respect for the free will of Austrian Germans. . . .

After the Saar question has been settled the German Government is ready to accept not only the letter but the spirit of the Locarno Pact. .

I can give the assurance that this sovereign nation has no other wish than to apply joyfully the strength and weight of her political, moral, and economic resources, not only for the healing of wounds which the past has inflicted on human kind, but towards the co-operation of all cultured and civilized nations. After a year of the National-Socialist Revolution Germany is fitter and more prepared than before to play her part among the nations in the preservation of happines and prosperity.—*Berlin, January 13,1934.*

The German Government, like the German people, are filled with the unconditional wish to make the greatest possible contribution to the preservation of peace in this world.—*Hamburg, August 17, 1934.*

On March 16, 1935, Germany announced conscription.

The German Government intend not to sign any treaty which seems to them incapable of fulfilment, but will scrupulously observe every treaty voluntarily concluded, even if it was drawn up before their assumption of power and office. In particular they will hold to all obligations arising out of Locarno so long as other parties are ready to stand by that treaty. . . . .

Germany has concluded a non-aggression pact with Poland which is more than a valuable contribution to European peace, and she will adhere to it unconditionally.

. . . We recognize the Polish State as the home of a great patriotic nation with the understanding and the cordial friendship of candid nationalists. . .

The German Reich, and in particular the present German Government, has no other wish than to live on friendly and peaceable terms with all neighbouring States —not only the larger States but the neighbouring smaller States. . . .

Both we National-Socialists and the Bolshevists are convinced that there is a gulf between us which can never be bridged. . . . So far as ever this Bolshevism draws Germany into its clutches we are the deadliest and most fanatical enemies. . . .

Germany neither intends nor wishes to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria, to annex Austria, or to conclude an Anschluss.—*Berlin, May 21, 1935.*

On March 7, 1936, Germany reoccupied the Rhineland and denounced Locarno.

I should like the German nation to see in the other nations historical realities which the visionary might like

to wish away, but which cannot be wished away For this reason I should like the German people to understand the inner motives of National-Socialist foreign policy. We feel, for instance, that it is very unpleasant that the access to the sea of a nation of 33,000,000 should cut through former territory of the Reich, but we recognize that it is unreasonable, because impossible, simply to wish to deny so great a State access to the sea. . . .

I shall demand from history confirmation of the fact that in no moment of my work for the German nation have I ever forgotten the obligation incumbent on me and on us all for the maintenance of European culture and civilization. . . .

France, before Locarno, had made pacts of mutual assistance with both Czechoslovakia and Poland. Germany did not take offence at these, not only because, unlike the Franco-Soviet Pact, they were subordinated to the provisions of the League Covenant, but because at that time Czechoslovakia, and especially Poland, always pursued a policy governed by their own national interests. Germany has no desire to attack these States, and does not believe they have any interest in attacking her. Above all, however, Poland will remain Poland and France will remain France, but Soviet Russia is the exponent, organized into a State, of a revolutionary philosophy. The introduction into Central Europe of this mighty military factor destroys any real European balance of power. . . .

After three years I believe that I can regard the struggle for German equality as concluded to-day. I believe, moreover, that thereby the first and foremost reason for our withdrawal from European collective

collaboration has ceased to exist. We have no territorial demands to make in Europe.—*Berlin, March 7, 1936.*

The lie goes forth again that Germany to-morrow or the day after will fall upon Austria or Czechoslovakia. I I ask myself always : who can these elements be who will have no peace, who incite continually, who must so distrust, and want no understanding ? Who are they ? I know they are not the millions who, if these inciters had their way, would have to take up arms.—*Berlin, May 1, 1936.*

We see in Bolshevism a bestial, mad doctrine which is a threat to us. . . . I cannot make a pact with a regime whose first act is not the liberation of workmen but of the inmates of gaols. . We cannot negotiate with Jewish Communist leaders. .

These are two worlds. In Bolshevist Russia there is devastation, grim murder, and ruin. Here is laughter, happiness, and beauty.—*Nuremberg, September 13, 1936.*

Our relations with Fascist Italy are a community of wills which it will be impossible for any party to ignore in future in any question of international politics. The agreement with Japan serves the same purpose—a standing together in defence against attacks on the civilized world such as are taking place to-day in Spain and could to-morrow or the day after to-morrow begin in the East or elsewhere.—*Nuremberg, September 7, 1937.*

Shall I remind you of the Bolshevist Revolution which slaughtered millions upon millions of people, but whose blood-stained murderers still occupy high places ? . . . . With one single country alone we have detested to enter into relationships. The State is Soviet Russia. We see

in Bolhsevism more now than before the incarnation of human destructive forces. . . . .

I may say that since the League of Nations has abandoned its continuous attempts at disturbance in Danzig and since the advent of the new Commissioner this most dangerous place for European peace has entirely lost its menace.. .

• I fear that a Japanese defeat in East Asia would never be to the advantage of Europe or America, but exclusively to that of Bolshevist Russia. But the greatest victory of Japan would be much less dangerous for the general peace of the world than a Bolshevist victory would be. . . .

The Polish State respects the national conditions in this country, and Danzig and Germany respect Polish rights. Thus it has been possible to find the way to an understanding which, emanating from Danzig, in spite of the assertions of many mischief-makers, has succeeded in removing all friction between Germany and Poland, and made it possible to work together in true amity.—*Berlin, February 20, 1938.*

The genuineness of Germany's desire for peace and international understanding is demonstrated by her large scale building schemes.—*Munich, February 24, 1938.*

On March 11 Germany invaded Austria.

The motto must be "Never war again."—*Berlin, May 1, 1938.*

We are not interested in suppressing other nations. We do not want to see other nations among us. We want to live our own life, and we want other poeples to do the same. . . .

Germany and Poland are two nations, and these nations will live, and neither of them will be able to do away with the other. I recognized all this, and we all must recognize that a people of 33,000,000 will always strive for an outlet to the sea. . . .

We have assured all our immediate neighbours of the integrity of their territory as far as Germany is concerned. That is no hollow phrase; it is our sacred will. . . .

The Sudetenland is the last territorial claim which I have to make in Europe. . . . . I have assured Mr. Chamberlain, and I emphasize it now, that when this problem is solved Germany has no more territorial problems in Europe. I have further assured him that at the moment when Czechoslovakia has solved its other problems—that is, when the Czechs shall have come to an understanding with their minorities—I shall not be interested in the Czech State any more, and that, so far as I am concerned, I can guarantee it—*Berlin, September 26, 1938.*

In general we have but one wish—that in the coming year we may be able to make our contribution to this general pacification of the whole world.—*Berchtesgaden, January 1, 1939.*

Only the war-mongers think there will be a war. I think there will be a long period of peace.—*Berlin, January 30, 1939.*

On March 15 Germany seized Czechoslovakia and on March 21 annexed Memel.

We are rearming, but do not dream of attacking other nations, providing they leave us alone. . . .

We have given Central Europe a great fortune—namely, peace, which is protected by the German might. —*Wilhelmshaven, April 1, 1939.*

As the National Leader of the German people I have never left any doubt that, wherever the national interests of the European comity were at stake, national interests must, if necessary, be relegated to second place in certain cases. And—as I have already emphasized—this is not for tactical reasons, for I have never left any doubt that I am absolutely earnest in this attitude of mind. . . . I have given binding declarations to a large number of States. None of these States can complain that even a trace of a demand contrary thereto has ever been made to them by Germany. . . .

The Czech nation, with the sum total of its skill and ability, its industry, its diligence, its love of its native soil and of its own national heritage, deserves our respect. . . . That which the best and wisest Czechs have struggled for decades to attain is as a matter of course granted to this people in the National-Socialist German Reich—namely, the right to their own nationality and the right to foster this nationality and to revive it. . . .

I have never ceased to uphold the view that the necessity of a free access to the sea for the Polish State cannot be ignored. . . .

If the sub-human forces of Bolshevism had proved victorious in Spain they might easily have spread across the whole of Europe. . . . Since 1918 Soviet Russia has engaged in 10 wars and military actions involving force and bloodshed. Germany was concerned in none of these.—*Berlin, April 28, 1939.*

On September 1 Germany invaded Poland.

Before we consider the events that led to the Soviet-German pact just before the outbreak of war and also Britain's alliance with Poland iet me touch briefly on the two main events that led to the almost unassailable position in which the Nazis found themselves in 1939—the seizure of Austria and Czechoslovakia. Hitler never made any bones about his intentions towards his homeland and therefore the grabbing of Austria in March 1938 should not have come as such a great surprise to the world at large—including even Italy. Hitler had laid his plans well by the formation of the Rome-Berlin Axis and the alliance with Tokyo. Hitler found himself in the centre of this vicious triangle, and though he opposed the German move, Mussolini dared not kick when the blow fell. But at the same time Hitler was greatly anxious regarding his friend's reactions and this could be noted from the terms of the message which he sent to Rome when he took the step. In the course of it he said. . . . "Do not see in this anything more than an act of legitimate national defence, and therefore an action which any man of character in my position would perform in the same way." To which the Duce sent a cold acquiescence and Hitler frothed his thanks. In relief he swore he would "never forget" his friend. But for Mussolini it was a bitter pill to swallow.

Let us also consider other factors that favoured Hitler. An excellent opportunity was given him just before the annexation of Austria to clean up the Army of undesirable elements that did not favour the campaign, when he sacked his old supporter Marshal von Blomberg because of the Army's resentment at his marriage with a lady much below his station in life, and he followed this up by also sacking

a few others and, to everybody's amazement, taking over command of the Army himself.

Another factor was the resignation of Mr. Eden from the British Cabinet, mainly over his country's attitude to Italy. Britain's foreign policy was in confusion and France was in no better state, especially as on the week-end Hitler decided to strike there was a big cabinet crisis, and Hitler found his way clear into Austria without fear of foreign intervention. And what of Austria itself? Years of one crisis after another finally saw Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg at the head of affairs. He had long been tormented by Nazi threats and bludgeonings and in the desperate hope of reaching some agreement and saving his country, he went to Berchtesgaden on February 12th. There he was treated to fresh threats. Hitler screamed at him—"Understand that I consider myself the Fuehrer not only of the Germans in the Reich, but of all Germans throughout the world!" Returning to Vienna, numbed with fear and forebodings, Schuschnigg was faced with fresh Nazi demands and the feeling among the Nazis not only outside but also inside his country was rising to fever-pitch. He decided to play his last card—to have a plebiscite, so that there might be a fair vote as to whether Austria remain independent or not. This sent Hitler into a fresh fury; he knew quite well what the results would be, so he made a fresh demand—that the plebiscite be called off or he would invade Austria. Schuschnigg capitulated. He called off the plebiscite and resigned and told his people brokenly over the radio—"I am instructed by the Federal President to inform the Austrian people that we are yielding to force—Determined at all costs even in this grave hour to avoid bloodshed, we have ordered the Austrian forces to withdraw without resistance. . . . And so I take my leave of the Austrian people. God save Austria!"

He knew he could expect no support from Italy and little or none from Britain or France. . . . Hitler knew this also, so he marched into his homeland and on March 13th announced the Anschluss.

Germany was now on the Brenner and had almost encircled Czechoslovakia—so the next move was obvious. Hitler did not wait long. Flushed from this comparatively easy victory, he moved fast—the Sudetenland was the first objective.

Czechoslovakia's crucifixion won for her the sympathy of the anti-Fascist world. The Czechs had run their state well despite the fact that those who drew the boundaries after World War I were liberal—very liberal—so far as the Czechs were concerned. Against 10,000,000 Czechoslovaks there were 3,231,688 Germans, 691,923 Hungarians and 81,737 Poles, but it can be truthfully said that they treated their minorities with great consideration and especially towards the end gave them far-reaching privileges. But Hitler was only looking for an excuse and he got it in the Sudetenland, though it was of the flimsiest. Soon after the annexation of Austria, the Nazi Press began their usual lying tactics, and their greatest lie was that the Sudetenland was originally German and but for the Peace treaties it should still have been. Originally part of Austro-Hungary, the Sudetenland was never at any time part of Germany. Staunch Nazis were soon found within the territory, particularly Konrad Henlein, at one time a believer in the Czechoslovak Republic, but to suit his own ends he turned a devout follower of Hitler. He schemed and schemed, staged "incidents" and soon his name rang through Europe as an arch *provocateur*. All through the summer crisis followed crisis, Henlein leading the chorus that his countrymen must be "protected."

Lord Runciman went to Prague in September as some

sort of an official adviser and mediator, but all he did was to strengthen the case of the Germans, for as far as could be gathered, he favoured the Sudeten Germans and naturally the dismemberment of the Czechoslovak State.

September was a month of vital importance, for not only did Runciman visit Prague, but Hitler ordered "manœuvres," mobilizing well over one million men, and on the ninth, at the Nazi Congress at Nuremberg he thumped and roared, declaring that Germany would "capitulate to no one." Europe more than ever seemed on the verge of war; the chances of peace or strife were on the balance; Europe hung expectedly dreading the moment which seemed inevitable when once more there would be war and war of an incalculable sort—gas, all the might of modern aircraft and armour—but the crisis was suddenly averted—Chamberlain flew to Berchtesgaden. That was on the fifteenth when the timid Chamberlain, let loose once more with his plans of appeasement, set forth to appease. Fear seemed to have eaten into the hearts of the British and French Governments—the disaster must be averted at all costs—even at the cost of a small progressive state and so Chamberlain returned with the following outrageous plan:—

(1) Czechoslovakia to cede to the Reich outright all territory containing more than 50% of Germans (including territory vital to Czechoslovakia's defence and her economic welfare).

(2) Plebiscites in other German districts.

(3) Czechoslovakia to give up her French and Russian pacts and be neutralised.

(4) Britain and France to guarantee Czechoslovakia's new abbreviated frontiers.

The Czechs wanted to submit the terms to the Hague Court under the 1925 treaty of conciliation between Germany and Czechoslovakia but what justice at that time was there left in Europe? Great pressure was brought to bear by Britain and France and at first the Czechs said they would die fighting rather than submit but the pressure told in the end; the Czech cabinet accepted the demands and then resigned. The Czech people, be it said, behaved with the utmost dignity and the irony of it, Chamberlain praised them for their "immense sacrifice"! On the other hand, Churchill remarked—"The idea that you are purchasing safety by throwing a small state to the wolves is a fatal delusion."

Throwing what dignity was left him to the winds, Chamberlain returned to Germany on September 22nd to meet Hitler at Godesberg, only to find that the Fuehrer, flushed with easy victory, had extended his demands to virtually cut Czechoslovakia in two. At the same time the pathetic Chamberlain was told that Hitler had no further demands on Europe and was believed. And Germany was not the only country to present their demands. The semi-Fascist government of Poland, like a jackal out after any loot she could get, laid claim to Teschen. She had a claim but when one considered the shocking treatment Warsaw meted out to her own minorities, it was a despicable act to whine for a further slice of territory when Czechoslovakia, betrayed, was unable to say no. Hungary also had her demands to make—she had suffered badly after the peace in 1919, and she was out to get back what she could.

But Czechoslovakia was determined to make a stand and she mobilized. Once more Europe was within an ace of war, but on September 29th Chamberlain was back in Germany again—this time to meet Mussolini and Daladier,

along with Hitler, at Munich. The Czechs were not allowed to be present and within the short space of nine hours the four men had to all intents and purposes finished Czechoslovakia as an independent state. It was decided that Germany should begin occupation of parts of the Sudetenland on October 1st; other districts should be left to plebiscites. Chamberlain also signed a pact with Hitler that the agreement over Czechoslovakia was "symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again," and returning to London, he burbled about "peace in our time." The occupation started on the first but it was soon evident that the Nazis would not be content with the ill-gotten gains granted them.

"Peace in our time"—Europe lived through a haunted winter, haunted with the fear of what Hitler would do next. With the coming of March, 1939, it was only too evident that another crisis was brewing, and on the 14th President Hacha was summoned from Prague to Berlin, where treated in the most abominable fashion, he was forced to sign away what was left of his country and the world looked on in wonder and amazement as Germany immediately occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia.

Then came Poland's turn. On March 21st the diplomatic offensive against the Poles started but that period will be dealt with later on in this chapter in the whole question of the post-war relationships between the Western Democracies and Russia.

Meawhile a word or two about the Balkans. Hungary, badly hit by the Peace Treaty, had long agitated for the revision of her frontiers but made little headway till the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, when she fell heir to Ruthenia, to get more after the war had started. She lost 68·5% of her territory and 58·% of her population in 1919

and most of her mineral deposits. But she came into her own again—temporarily—after this war started, but more of her anon. Rumania, smothered in riches—oil, grain and timber—had, thanks to gross misrule, a population wretchedly poor and ignorant, but under Carol she managed to remain friendly with the Western Powers till Germany started the march towards the South-East. Yugoslavia, torn apart by racial hatreds, might have been better prepared to face her fate if she had not lost Alexander (when he was assassinated in Marseilles) ; Bulgaria, also suffered by the peace treaties, with a poverty-stricken population which has always had a strong leaning towards Soviet Russia (so much so that she dared not send a soldier to the Russian Front), while Greece, weakened by rival factions, but able to win the applause of the free world by her magnificent fight against Italy, will be dealt with in more detail as this story progresses.

To fully appreciate what happened in Europe between the seizure of Czechoslovakia and the outbreak of the present struggle, just before which Russia and Germany made their famous pact, we must examine the general attitude of the Western Democracies towards the Soviet in the fateful years between Hitler's rise to power and 1939. After the unsuccessful attempts to overthrow the new regime in Russia after the Revolution—attempts in which most of the European Powers took a hand—Russia became a Land of Mystery, towards which looks of suspicion and often dread were cast, though it is interesting to recall the German-Soviet Treaty of 1933, which was the sequel to several made between the two countries from 1921 to 1929, and by which "the German Government and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, being animated by the desire to do

everything that can contribute to the maintaining of general peace, and convinced that the interests of the German People and the peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics demand a continued confidential collaboration, have agreed to consolidate their existing friendly relations through a Special Treaty, "by which" if one of the contracting parties were, despite its peaceful behaviour, attacked by a third Power or several Powers, the other contracting party must observe neutrality during the whole duration of the conflict," etc. Such friendly relations remained for about two years until it became evident that the USSR were attempting to establish more friendly contacts with the Western Democracies. Hitler then changed his tune and the idea of a future "menace" in the East came into his utterances. It is also interesting to recall that in the early post-war years the relationship between the Soviet and Italy was very cordial. Even as early as 1924 Italy recognised the Soviet Union and was one of the first Powers to do so, and in 1933 the two countries joined in a pact whereby Rome undertook not to join any *bloc* that would be against the interests of the Soviet. On the other hand during the periods quoted above, although trade went on between the Western Democracies and the Soviet Union, on the political field the attitude of Britain in particular towards Moscow was cold in the extreme.

Then a momentous event occurred in 1934—Soviet Russia joined the League. It is fairly certain that at this stage Moscow fully appreciated the "shape of things to come." She realized that Germany and Italy, and Japan on the other flank, had evil designs for the future, and, although she made attempts to remain on as friendly terms as possible, particularly with Germany, she felt she must guard against future Fascist aggression. She therefore laid the real foundations for her present armed might and, at the same

time, persuaded that the Western Democracies were desirous of peace, she showed marked willingness to come to a more friendly understanding with them. It was an everlasting tragedy that at this stage Britain did not attempt to hold out the hand of friendship; France did to some extent, but Britain showed her disinterestedness in Eastern European affairs. For instance, it will be remembered that when Russia entered the League, there was being formed a pact of mutual assistance, which anyone could join, between France and Russia and also between Czechoslovakia and Russia. Britain remained aloof; Poland also refused to join in.

On looking back over these years, one cannot but realize the tragedy of British foreign policy—with more foresight, courage and progressiveness on the part of her leaders what strides might have been made towards a lasting peace. Britain seemed blind to the future intentions of Hitler and his gang and instead of curbing his activities walked into one mistake after another (for instance the signing of the Anglo-German Naval Treaty in 1935, which strengthened Hitler's case enormously, and the really half-hearted attitude towards the Abyssinian War). Even those who dislike Soviet Russia most must admit that during that period Moscow adhered faithfully to the principles of the League, but alas Germany was allowed to grow from strength to strength. But despite that, Moscow continued in her efforts to come to some real understanding with Britain. And so the tragedy went on—the Abyssinian War, the mockery of non-intervention in Spain, Japan's invasion of China—and most appalling of all—Munich.

It is now known, and admitted, that during the fateful year of 1938, the Soviet Government made repeated proposals for stronger measures to curb Germany's activities, particularly

after the seizure of Austria. On March 17th she asked "for a firm and unambiguous stand in regard to the problem of the collective 'salvation of peace' by the great Powers." This was rejected by the British Government as "inopportune." Other proposals of a similar nature were made but Britain remained adamant in her cold-shoulder policy towards the Soviet Union. "Appeasement" to Germany was Chamberlain's watchword—to hell with Soviet overtures.

In this necessarily sketchy picture of post-war Europe I am endeavouring to show the reasons for the Soviet entering into her pact with Germany—a pact which at the time the many enemies of the Soviet endeavoured to show up as a "betrayal" by Russia and in fact that she was little better than the Fascists in her "craving" for "Imperial Power."

To fully understand the significance of the fateful months of 1939 between the seizure of Czechoslovakia and the invasion of Poland, we must carefully consider Anglo-Soviet relations.

It can safely be said that from the end of the last war, when the new régime in Russia was established, successive British Governments were responsible in no small measure for the abysmally ignorant attitude of the vast majority of the British people towards the USSR, especially during the 30's. To the ordinary man-in-the-street in Britain Russia was a land of mystery; he did not understand its ideals, for he made little attempt to do so, and the spate of literature (good and bad, and more often bad than good) that was put out about the USSR did little or nothing to dispel that ignorance. The reading public in Britain were in fact more bamboozled than anything else by these books, and there was only a small minority who really settled down to study them with some understanding and made an honest attempt to pick the

good from the bad and thus form some sort of a rational outlook on the USSR. Then again the newspapers were from time to time filled with the most astounding stories alleged to have emanated from Soviet Russia; they were read avariciously and believed, although a very large percentage of them were founded on a tissue of lies. The British people have also as a rule a profound respect for their government and as it was the general tendency for the government in power to hold the Soviet Government at arm's length and greet it with every possible show of suspicion, it was not at all difficult to pursue the astounding policy that was pursued by the Chamberlain Government, particularly during the fateful months of 1939—and get away with it. For some reason best known to themselves, the leaders of the country preferred to meet the Axis, giving away time and time again to them with their policy of appeasement, hoping against hope that somehow or other war would be averted (and looking back on it all now one wonders how any sane body of men could have hoped to carry on proper business with Hitler) and so were being sown the seeds for the break in Anglo-Soviet relations just before the start of war. I would not say that all members of the British Cabinet at that time were in favour of appeasing Hitler, but there were powerful elements in it that won the day, though if one studies British policy one can detect that from time to time there were elements that showed a profound dislike for Hitler, and therefore during the fateful months, British foreign policy seemed to sway at times instead of pursuing a straightforward course—even to fateful consequences. Then there was another element that has to be taken into account—the powerful—at times all powerful—vested interests that had not a small say in Whitehall. They were violently anti-Soviet and believed that the future of their country and

Europe lay in some link-up between the Western Democracies and Germany. But they realized at the same time that Germany would have to expand, and "if so," they said, "well, why not towards the East—towards the vast, rich lands of the Ukraine ?" They believed in the German claim to "Lebensraum," which has figured so much in Nazi propaganda, in which Hitler and his gang tried to argue that it was the "moral" right of the German people to have sufficient space to live in, even at the cost of their neighbours. Therefore to those who would vouch the Germans this creed, what more fruitful territory could there be than the vast rolling steppe lands of the USSR ? And so it could not but have pleased the vested interests to see a good scrap between Germany and Russia, provided they could remain out of it. How far the members of the Chamberlain Cabinet were involved in this school of thought, it is difficult to say, but at any rate by their policy they did much, whether intentionally or not, to promote it. But at the same time the British public had also to be considered. They as I have said already were horribly ignorant, so far as Russia was concerned, but they had also sufficient sense to realize that the policy towards Germany was leading Europe sooner or later into chaos, and they were beginning to ask whether Russia was as bad as it was painted (and I am sure, judging by the very cordial outlook on the USSR shown by most Britishers to-day, if they had only then known something more of the truth, the Soviet-German Pact would, in all probability, never have taken place). The tension grew; they were more and more inclined to the view that some sort of understanding must be come to with Moscow. And so all through the hectic spring and summer of 1939 the British Government pursued a half-hearted policy towards the USSR, trying to make people believe that they were

attempting to fix up some sort of an understanding, but if they failed, well, it wouldn't be Britain's fault.

It is impossible with the space at my disposal to go with any great detail into the various moves that went on between London and Moscow; but I should touch on the principal ones. These are of serious and very honest attempts by the Soviet Government to reach some sort of an agreement with the Western Democracies. Take for instance the proposal made on March 18th by Moscow to have a conference between Britain, France, Poland, Rumania, Turkey, and the USSR to put a stop to further aggression. The British reply was to the effect that the plan was too "premature," and London countered with a proposal that Britain, France, Poland and the USSR should join together in a declaration against aggression. Russia agreed but the Polish Government (and be this remembered in the later anti-Soviet declarations by Poland) refused to sign any document along with Russia, and Britain and France did not adopt the same tactics as against Czechoslovakia and bring severe pressure on the Poles, for the matter was suddenly dropped. Furthermore, there was again a cooling-off by the British Government, so far as Moscow was concerned, for they did not again consult the Soviet till mid-April, and during that period—on March 22nd—Hitler seized Memel. This alarmed Chamberlain so much that his government—on March 31st—gave their famous guarantee to the Poles—without consulting the Soviet. On April 7th, when Italy invaded Albania, Chamberlain rushed in with two more guarantees—this time for Rumania and Greece, and again he did not consult Russia. Now we come to a very important point in Anglo-Soviet relations. Two days after the guarantees to Greece and Rumania were made the British Ambassador in Moscow proposed that the USSR should

give guarantees to Poland and Rumania. Now it is important to note that these two countries were likely to be attacked and by their positions little or no help (as was proved later in the case of Poland) could be given them immediately by Britain or France, so it looked as if the USSR would have to bear the brunt of any such attacks and be it remembered the Soviet had reason to be suspicious of certain elements in the British and French Governments, so they replied by suggesting a pact between Britain, France and Russia not only to protect Poland and Rumania but to resist aggression anywhere, pointing out that to lay stress on the two particular states, was to invite aggression on other border states not mentioned in the guarantee. Russia's three main points were :—(1) a mutual assistance pact between Britain, France and Russia; (2) a military convention enforcing the pact; (3) a guarantee to *all* border states from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The British Government did not reply for three weeks and in that period two important events occurred—Germany denounced the Anglo-German Naval Treaty and Poland entered into a non-aggression pact with Germany. On May 9th Britain replied to Moscow. They ignored the idea of the triple pact and harked back to the guarantees for Poland and Rumania. Moscow pointed out that nothing was said about any assistance which the Soviet, on the basis of reciprocity, should receive from Britain and France if the USSR were drawn into military operations in fulfilment of their obligations. (And once more the question arose as to how the Western Democracies could render immediate assistance to Poland and Rumania). Finally, on May 27th, the British and French Ambassadors in Moscow were instructed to agree to discuss a triple pact. Nothing much happened for a couple of weeks after that till on June 14th Mr. Strang arrived in Moscow. He was

a little man (so far as international importance was concerned) but his arrival caused a big stir. He was a minor official, had no real powers whatsoever and so things dragged on through July. On the 29th, speaking at a bye-election, Mr. Lloyd George, after dealing with the impossibility of Britain fulfilling its guarantees to Poland without Russian assistance, summed up the situation beautifully, as follows :—

"Negotiations have been going on for four months with Russia, and no one knows how things stand to-day. You are dealing with the greatest military power in the world ; you are asking them to come to your help ; you are not negotiating terms with an enemy but with a friendly people whose aid you want. Mr. Chamberlain negotiated directly with Hitler. He went to Germany to see him. He and Lord Halifax made visits to Rome. They went to Rome, drank Mussolini's health, shook his hand, and told him what a fine fellow he was. But whom have they sent to Russia ? They have not sent even the lowest in rank of a Cabinet Minister ; they have sent a clerk in the Foreign Office. It is an insult. Yet the Government want the help of their gigantic army and air force, and of this very brave people—no braver on earth—who are working their way through great difficulties to the emancipation of their people. If you want their help you ought to send somebody there who is worthy of our dignity and of theirs. As things are going on at present we are trifling with a grave situation. I cannot tell you what I think about the way things are being handled. Meanwhile, Hitler is fortifying Danzig. Danzig is becoming a fortress, and before that treaty is signed Danzig will be as much a city of the German Empire as Breslau or Berlin. They (the National

Government) have no sense of proportion or of the gravity of the whole situation when the world is trembling on the brink of a great precipice and when liberty is challenged."

Tension was rising to a height and the Soviet were agitating for the staff talks that had been proposed some time before. It was generally thought that a big crisis would develop in August and on July 23rd Russia hoped that military missions from Britain and France would come to Moscow immediately. Two days later the British Government accepted the proposal, but there were the following extraordinary sequels :—

(1) Despite the now obvious seriousness of the situation, second-raters were again chosen—not Gort or Gamelin—and when they arrived in Moscow, like Mr. Strang, it was found they had next to no powers.

(2) Although the proposal was accepted in London on July 25th, the missions were not sent out till August 5th and, notwithstanding the urgency of the situation, did not even go by air, but by a vessel that did not allow the missions to reach their destination till six days after their departure from London.

(3) Almost immediately the political discussions were adjourned and Mr. Strang returned to London—he went back by air !

And then once more the Poles took a hand, despite the fact that Russia was the only nation that could lend them immediate assistance against German aggression. They again showed an antagonistic attitude towards the Soviet and, to all appearances, the British and French Governments did not take much trouble to alter their views. The Soviet had pointed that, in order to render military assistance to the Poles against Germany, it would naturally be necessary for

the Red Army to cross into Poland to tackle the aggressors, as Russia had no common frontier with Germany. France and Britain put this point to Warsaw and the Poles replied that they themselves were capable of meeting German armed might (and they were only able to hold on for 17 days when they had to do so), that they did not require the help of the Soviet and would not accept it. The Western Democracies took this as final! Imagine the position of the Soviet. They would have to wait till their own frontiers were reached before they would get to grips with victorious German armies—what therefore was the use of entering into a pact that would involve themselves in such a fashion. It is difficult to see why the British and French Governments did not even threaten to call off their guarantee to Poland, unless Warsaw saw reason.

Little is to be wondered at that the Moscow correspondent of "The Times" was forced to admit on August 2nd :—

> "The Bolshevists have closely studied world events since the war and have come to definite conclusions. The conclusions are that the democratic states have not done their best to stop aggressions, partly because they have listened to denunciations of 'Bolshevism' and partly because they have been incapable of combining effectively. The Kremlin has been a critical spectator of the 'helplessness' over Manchuria, the 'failure' of sanctions, the 'farce' of non-intervention, and the 'perjury' of Munich, and while recognising that there has been a change of heart in the West, will not forget these painful lessons. Hence the difficulty about 'indirect aggression.'"

The Soviet Government had therefore become sadly disillusioned. They saw no point in attempting to continue negotiations and as it had always been their policy to pursue

friendly relationships wtih their capitalist neighbours (though never at any time could they be accused of pro-Fascist sympathies) they and Germans entered into negotiations which saw on August 23rd the conclusion of their famous non-aggression pact which said :—

> "The Government of the German Reich and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, guided by the desire to strengthen the cause of peace between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and taking as a basis the fundamental regulations of the Neutrality Agreement concluded in April, 1926, between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, have reached the following agreement :—
>
> Article 1.—The two Contracting Parties bind themselves to refrain from any act of force, any aggressive action and any attack on one another, both singly and also jointly with other Powers.
>
> Article 2.—In the event of one of the Contracting Parties becoming the object of warlike action on the part of a third Power, the other Contracting Party shall in no manner support this third Power.
>
> Article 3.—The Governments of the two Contracting Parties shall in future remain continuously in touch with one another, by way of consultation in order to inform one another on questions touching their joint interests.
>
> Article 4.—Neither of the two Contracting Parties shall participate in any grouping of Powers which is directly or indirectly against the other Party.
>
> Article 5.—In the event of disputes or disagreements arising between the Contracting Parties on questions of this or that kind, both Parties would clarify these

disputes or disagreements exclusively by means of friendly exchange of opinion or, if necessary, by arbitration committees.

Article 6.—The present Agreement shall be concluded for a period of ten years on the understanding that, in so far as one of the Contracting Parties does not give notice of termination one year before the end of this period, the period of validity of this Agreement shall automatically be regarded as prolonged for a further period of five years.

Article 7.—The present Agreement shall be ratified within the shortest possible time. The instruments of ratification shall be exchanged in Berlin. The Agreement takes effect immediately after it has been signed."

The shock in the Western Democracies was immense and in their ignorance, people accused the Soviet Union of "double-dealing," "treachery," etc., etc., without realizing or really having been told of the events leading up to the pact. Soviet Russia had earnestly endeavoured to reach some definite agreement with Britain and France, but what real chance had they ?—what chance, for that matter, did they ever have to be fully understood by the peoples of these two countries ?And to accuse them (accusations made by people who had reviled the USSR consistently for 20 years) of "betraying Democracy" was ludicrous. For instance, it was the first time that these enemies of the Soviet people even admitted that they belonged to the Democracies !

Poland would not have Soviet aid ; Moscow was doubtful of the assistance that she might get from the West ; she had to safeguard her own interests and to do so properly the pact was to her the only way.

The collapse of Poland and further accusations against Russia—this time of "stabbing Poland in the back"—will be

dealt with in the first chapter of this book ; meanwhile let us examine briefly what was happening in the other side of the world—in the Far East.

The first milestone in the rise and ultimate fall (which is now more than certain) of Japan was the annexation of Korea after the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95. Since then the Japanese have given themselves over to aggression in one form or another for 50 years. This has been prompted by two motives (1) to make herself the greatest power in the East, especially against Russia and (2) "Lebensraum"—like Germany and Italy, she had to "expand or burst." For instance, her population actually doubled between 1868 (when it was 31,000,000) and 1930 (when it had grown to 70,000,000). Therefore it was only natural that the Japanese should reach out towards what had been for long a decadent China. Japan's aggression continued and before 1914 not only did she have Korea but also Formosa and extensive rights in Manchuria. And she was not satisfied for in 1915 she put forward her famous Twenty-one Demands to China, which had they been accepted might well have crippled the Chinese for centuries. China did give way in many points and then there was a 10-year lull when Japan pursued a more moderate policy under the direction of Baron Shidehara. But in 1927 a military clique rose to power ; Shidehara's progressive policy was pushed aside and once more the war drums beat in the Far East. But China was at the same time awakening from her long torpor. The Kuomintang was beginning to really assert itself and Chiang Kai-shek was coming into prominence. But the militarists were rapidly extending their all-powerful influence at Tokyo, and there came to power Baron Tanaka who showed that not only was Japan determined to make herself the greatest power in the Far East but had also designs on world power. Tanaka started off by

declaring Tokyo's determination of maintaining "peace and order in Manchuria"; then followed the famous "incident" in which the Japanese army showed their brutality and also the League of Nations their weakness in being unable to deal with this unprovoked aggression in any effective way whatsoever. But the Chinese were getting thoroughly tired of their subordinate position and when in 1932 there was incident in Shanghai and fighting broke out, Chinese soldiers surprised the world by their bravery and tenacity in the suburbs of Chapei.

Till 1937 incidents followed in quick succession; Japan growing more truculent and pressing her various demands, though it was evident that a fresh spirit was abroad in China. Japan's ambitions soon became obvious. Her main idea was to drive a wedge between Russia and China. This could be done by extending Japanese influence westwards through Inner Mongolia with the idea of setting up a buffer state between Japan proper and Outer Mongolia which was under Russian control, and at the same time detach North China from the Nanking Government by working upon the Northern warlords and thirdly to link up North China and Manchukuo in one economic *bloc* to be run in Japan's interests. North China was a rich prize. Not only was there much fertile land, but North China produced 90% of China's wool, 70% coal, 46% of her iron reserves, and 33% of China's cotton. There were also the large trade centres to be considered and altogether the loss of the North would be a great blow to the rest of China. But China was at last awake, and encouraged in so small measure by the Communists, Chiang Kai-shek aroused his countrymen to the gravity of the situation. The South patched up their quarrels and Japan (probably sooner than they had planned for) decided to act. Therefore on the night of July 7th,

1937, shots were exchanged in the small, inconspicuous town of Linkouchiao and this led to brutalities by the Japs on a large scale a few days later. To begin with Japan made rapid progress but the Chinese were beating an orderly retreat. I cannot go into the details of this early fighting—suffice it to say that while things were boiling to a head in Europe, Japan was preparing for great advances against Britain and America in the Pacific, but the Chinese were gradually becoming unified and they fought on with the utmost gallantry (even when the Burma Road was closed to them). The early sufferings that the Chinese had to face were manifold but they faced them with a wonderful determination.

Now we must return to Europe. I have endeavoured to illustrate the state of things up to the signing of the Soviet-German Pact. The first chapter will show how Europe faced up to the opening stages of this great world struggle.

CHAPTER I

THE 17-DAY WAR IN POLAND

On September 1st, 1939, nobody wanted war. And in saying this I include the Germans. Despite the strides that have been made in the long history of mankind towards a better and yet better world; despite all the progress that has been made year by year in science, political thinking, education, the healing of suffering, justice, international communications, the care of the poor and needy, in fact all that we humans strive for, none of us can get rid of one curse—war.

One night, not so many years ago, I travelled in a train, sharing a compartment with three others. Over in that corner sat a Belgian student, in the other corner was a Czech banker, beside me an Austrian engineer. Fortunately for me we found a common platform in English. We talked the whole night of international relationships. The four of us had been children in World War No. 1, and I probably, as it had hardly touched my native Scotland (at least in the material sense), had least bitter memories of it. But the Belgian could remember vividly the German occupation, the Austrian the final downfall of the empire, the Czech his people's striving for freedom. All our parents had been in opposite camps, but that night old, bitter memories were completely forgotten, and we chatted on hour by hour the best of friends. As the dawn crept through the carriage windows the Austrian turned to me and with a smile remarked—"Could you imagine any of we four ever facing each other over 'No Man's Land'—how impossible"—and with a smile I added, "impossible." To-day the Belgian may

be dead—shot as a hostage; the Austrian may have found a grave on the steppes of Russia; the Czech may be eking out a bare livelihood in the streets of Prague. So we four, who looked upon another war as "impossible," were to go through it again. We were ordinary men-in-the-street, wanted to live our own lives—to find a suitable calling, marry, rear a family and carry on as God decreed we should, but instead we are now at each other's throats—why? because we are not masters of our own destinies. None of us wanted war—certainly not the Austrian—but such, despite the advances of science, is human nature that we were so led away by the ambitions and also the blunders of a few that once more we find ourselves in the midst of a world-wide holocaust.

I said to start with that the Germans did not desire this war. They did not but they allowed themselves to be carried away by the teachings of one of those creatures that is thrown up every other century and he led them on, trading on the weakness of others—one colossal weakness being the hopeless, blind, foreign policy of the Western Democracies that I have already dealt with—and at last reached a stage when he must expand or burst, with the result that the German man-in-the-street is faced with a desperately hopeless future.

The German people by September 1939 had gone on from one triumph to another, and everything had been won so easily, that their rulers believed they could get away with yet another piece of bluff, for I am sure, in his innermost heart, even Hitler quailed at the thought of setting the world alight. But he had reached such a stage when his acts were hurling him on despite himself and so he faced his latest victim Poland, hoping that he would get Danzig and perhaps settle the Corridor question once and for all, without war,

but he did not bargain for two things—that the Poles would resist and, secondly, that the Western Democracies would really at last join in. Britain and France had reached a stage when they were finally tired out by the series of crises that had alarmed Euorpe for so long; despite their criminal lack of preparedness, they were persuaded that Hitler must at last be stopped.

Regarding Poland, I have already stated in the Introduction that the Warsaw Government was semi-Fascist. It had been for a number of years and those who led Poland have much to answer for. I have already shown how they turned down Soviet overtures during the fateful months after Munich, and left their country to be faced by the then greatest war machine the world had ever known, with not the slightest chance of outside assistance, it being perfectly obvious that their allies in the West could not give them any real assistance in time. It should have been plain to them all through that the Western Democracies could never have attempted in these early months to smash their way through the Siegfried Line. Not only were they unprepared for such an operation, but the cost would have been so colossal that they would never have dared risk the loss of thousands of what really well trained troops they had on an attack which would not only have surely failed, but might well have had disastrous repercussions much earlier than the tragedy that overwhelmed France in 1940. The Germans had got together such an army that not only could they have overrun Poland but at the same time have beaten off all serious attacks on the Siegfried Line.

What else then could the Poles have hoped for—aid from the British and French air forces? Both, as must have been clear to everyone, were much below the strength of the Luftwaffe and in addition to that, right from the moment

war was declared, it was considered in both London and Paris that the Germans would attempt immediate, devastating attacks on British and French cities. With therefore the knowledge that both countries' air forces were ill-prepared to tackle even the defence of their cities how then could the Western Democracies have been expected to give any air support to Poland ?

Poland's decision to fight was an act of criminal foolishness and also showed great bravery. It was criminal in that the Polish leaders allowed themselves to be enveloped in a struggle without the slightest hope of survival, that is, unless they had turned to the only country that could have given them proper assistance and that country was Soviet Russia. And why did they really refuse her assistance ?

I shall turn to my original charge—that the Polish Government was semi-Fascist. Poland from the close of the Great War was ruled, or rather misruled, to a very great extent in a semi-Feudal fashion. Great tracts of the country were in the hands of unscrupulous landlords and the results were that many of their subjects were treated in the most brutal fashion—and this applied in no small measure to their very considerable minorities. Despite what has so very often been said to the contrary, the Poles did not come out at all badly in the peace treaties, especially in the East, where they had large numbers of White Russians and Ukrainians in territories grabbed by Poland in her own private war with the USSR after the Great War—a war in which she secured not a little support from the West. This misrule took the form of open brutality against defenceless townspeople and villagers and pogroms against the considerable Jewish populations of Western Poland. This was brought up more than once before the League of Nations—for instance, in 1930, as a result of British public opinion, the violent Polish persecution

in Eastern Galicia in the so-called "pacification" of that area was brought before the League Council. About that time also the Poles openly declared at Geneva that they must "get rid" of at least 2,500,000 of these 3,250,000 Jews. Was it to be wondered at, therefore, that those in power at Warsaw did not wish Soviet assistance?—they might have been asked to do something about improving their rotten system of government.

Be it said however for the Polish people that they did fight, though thanks to those who were allowed to rule over their country for so long, they only faced national suicide, and they have for the past six years suffered more—much more—than they really deserved.

The last few days of August were nerve-wracking in the extreme—days of suspense that have never been equalled in the history of Europe. "Incidents" on the German-Polish border came in quick succession, while the finishing touches to the drama were being made at Berchtesgaden. There Sir Nevile Henderson, the British Ambassador, met Hitler in four hectic interviews. The first was on August 23rd when Henderson was the bearer of a letter from Chamberlain which contained three main points—(1) that Britain would stand by Poland; (2) that they were prepared to discuss points arising between the Germans and the Poles peaceably; (3) that the British Government would welcome direct conversations regarding minorities etc., between Germany and Poland. The Fuehrer was in a violent mood and he made sweeping charges against the Poles and thundered that he would not shrink from war and he also declared that the British were determined to "destroy" Germany.

Two days later Henderson once more saw Hitler. He was calmer, though he again cursed the Poles. Henderson

suggested a meeting between Ribbentrop and Col. Beck. Hitler disagreed. Henderson returned to London and the British Government spent a hectic week-end. Henderson had his third interview with the Fuehrer on the 28th. He bore a message from the British Government suggesting direct negotiations between Berlin and Warsaw, with Britain lending her good offices. In reply to this Hitler increased his demands—(1) Danzig; (2) the Corridor; (3) a "rectification" in Silesia. Henderson asked him to be reasonable. Hitler then suggested a "deal"—some sort of an alliance with Britain and a discussion on the question of the colonies.

Then came the big crisis. Henderson saw Hitler at 7-15 p.m. on August 29th. Hitler was in a towering passion —Poland was beginning to mobilize, and there were more alleged border "incidents" to aggravate the Fuehrer.

Hitler made three points :—

(1) Germany would agree to direct negotiations with Poland, apparently to achieve British friendship.

(2) Germany would not take part in any guarantee regarding territorial changes without consulting the USSR.

(3) The Polish plenipotentiary must arrive *next day*. (To which Henderson remarked that this looked like an ultimatum but he was assured that the Pole would be well received.)

It seemed the old Schuschnigg game over again—to call a Polish emissary to be bullied into submission; the British Government saw no reason why the German proposals could not be submitted to Poland through the Polish Ambassador. The Poles had only been given 28 hours and 45 minutes to discuss the situation, and if they desired, send an emissary.

Henderson met Ribbentrop on the evening of the 30th. No Polish plenipotentiary had arrived and Ribbentrop read over a document to Henderson containing 16 points for a settlement, which apparently the British Ambassador could not follow as the German read it so quickly. When Henderson asked for a copy, Ribbentrop refused on the grounds that a Polish representative had not appeared. Henderson asked that the Polish Ambassador be sent for, but again this was refused.

The Polish Government had decided to agree to the principle of direct discussions and their Ambassador (who was unsuccessful in obtaining an interview with Ribbentrop on the morning of the 31st) was instructed to tell the Germans that they accepted the British proposals. They however drew the line at a document in the form of an ultimatum.

Then matters moved rapidly to a head. Halifax was sending telegrams to Berlin and Warsaw appealing for a settlement; at 6-30 p.m. Ribbentrop at last received the Polish Ambassador and handed him the 16 points; the Pole tried to get into touch with his Government but the wires had been cut; at 9 p.m. Berlin broadcast the 16 points, saying that Warsaw had rejected them (the Polish Government needless to say had never seen them) and at dawn on September 1st, according to the Germans, the Poles were "invading" the Fatherland!—Hitler had crossed the Rubicon.

When earlier in the year, the Polish Government refused help from the Soviet they should have considered more carefully three main points :—

(1) Poland's frontiers were open for 1,600 miles and she had no Maginot Line.

(2) German possession of East Prussia and Slovakia meant a gigantic pincer grip on Poland without a shot being fired.

(3) Germany, with her overwhelming air power, could deliver shattering blows at any number of points, and thus very quickly dislocate communications, while her paratroops (often disguised as Polish soldiers) were dropped with ease at numerous strategic points to provide further dislocation.

Thus under the command of von Brauchitsch, German forces invaded Poland from North, West and South.

There had been a long period of drought and therefore conditions were ideal for the German armoured forces which found natural obstacles, such as rivers and streams, easy to cross.

Another important factor was that Poland's mobilization was incomplete and on that fatal morning it is estimated she had but 800,000 men in the field. Germany was fully mobilized and was vastly superior in mechanized divisions and air power. Poland's air strength was poor, her planes were soon knocked out of the sky and the Germans with the utmost brutality set about bombing towns and villages, not only to terrorize the inhabitants, but also to prevent the calling up of reinforcements. Germany's Northern group, commanded by von Bock, operating from East Prussia soon menaced Warsaw, while the Southern group, commanded by von Rundstedt, based on Slovakia was overwhelmingly strong. In addition, on all fronts, the Germans had a superabundance of reserves.

The first German detachments crossed the frontier about 4 a.m. and half an hour later vast areas of Poland were feeling the weight of incessant bombing.

It was estimated that in the first 48 hours the chief aerodromes in Poland were blown to smithereens and at the same time all the main railway centres were being attacked unmercifully. On land everything went according to plan for the Germans and by the 8th the outskirts of Warsaw were reached, so that by the 17th when the Government had fled, except for pockets of resistance here and there, the campaign to all intents and purposes was over.

Before I go further I should put in here a word regarding the gallant defence of Warsaw. Seldom have the people of a city put up a more remarkable struggle against overwhelming odds. Against the sorry background of misrule in post-Great War Poland, the name of Mayor Starzynski will live in the history of this war. Though ill he continued his broadcasts till the very end, instructing his gallant fellow-citizens and urging them on to greater efforts. Emergency bands of volunteers were quickly formed, not only to fight the enemy but also the fires that broke out everywhere as a result of incessant shelling and bombing. But it was a hopeless struggle—the Government had fled, and resistance had broken down everywhere, until finally on the 27th the city had to surrender. The magnificent defence of Warsaw will ever stand out as one of the most glorious episodes of this war. It showed what Poles could do but all in vain against the history of those fatal years.

Poland had expected assistance from the British and French from the moment she was invaded but for three days she had to fight alone. What was running through Chamberlain's mind these three days it is difficult to say—surely he didn't expect Hitler to suddenly call off the war. When he appeared in the House of Commons on the 2nd he ran the chance of a very hostile reception and on that day the British Ambassador in Warsaw telegraphed to

Halifax—"I trust I may be informed at the earliest possible moment of our declaration of war and that our air force will make every effort to show activity on the Western Front with a view to relieving pressure here." But it was impossible to send such assistance, in fact any real assistance to Poland at all.

Finally at 11 on the morning of Sunday the 3rd Chamberlain broadcast that a state of war existed between Britain and Germany and France followed six hours later. Both countries soon got down to the job together and by the 12th British troops were landing in France.

CHAPTER II

RUSSIA MARCHES IN

WHEN one recalls the terrific onslaught Russia had to face after June 22nd, 1941, one looks back in wonder at the general lack of understanding there was for her when on September 17th, 1939, to safeguard herself against future aggression, and also to safeguard Eastern Poland, she marched into that country.

As I have already explained, Russia, after her pact with Germany, had to face a hostile world (which was nothing new to her and had generally been the case from the Revolution onwards). The result was when she invaded Poland, she was cursed as an "unprincipled aggressor" and Stalin was linked with Hitler as a "smash-and-grab merchant." The full facts of the case were never then considered and above all, a very important point was not taken into account—that *Polish resistance to all intents and*

purposes had by then collapsed. This is what a reliable observer on the spot had to say about it. He was actually *The Times* correspondent and on the day the Red Army entered Poland he telegraphed to his paper :—

> "The Polish military situation, which a week ago was described in this correspondence as an orderly retreat with the army intact, has now become the exact opposite. The Polish Front has collapsed completely, and it is plain that little more remains for the Germans to do except mop up what is left of a gallant army of more than 1,500,000 men."

And two days later it was also admitted in *The Times* that "by the time the Red Army entered Poland, Polish resistance outside a few areas had collapsed or was collapsing."

Despite such evidence Russia was accused and is still being accused in certain pro-Polish quarters, that the country in the midst of her life-and-death struggle was "stabbed in the back."

If one cares to study the course of the German campaign it is easy to see that by the 17th—in fact some days before that date—the Polish Army had completely disintegrated. In the first place when Germany attacked, the Poles (as I have already stated) had not properly mobilized ; they were being attacked along a vast front, and the devastating air attacks that were carried out on all their centres made it quite impossible for the various sections to link up properly.

Even as early as September 6th, when German troops were reported 42 miles from Warsaw, the seat of the Polish Government had been removed and the following day *The Times* commented—"A glance at the map will show the folly of any attempt to hold the Polish frontiers against an attack in force. The German advances therefore have not

been unexpected either in extent or speed and may even in both respects have been inferior to German expectations," and two days after this somewhat pompous utterance, Warsaw radio issued a message by the Warsaw commandant to the troops that the German advance must be stemmed and that he and his men were resolved to do so, "even to the last man." He added that at any moment the radio station might be destroyed ; in that event he would placard the town with the message to meet the German challenge. On the same day it was stated that fierce fighting was in progress about five or six miles from the city, while retreats on the fronts north and south-west of Warsaw were officially admitted. It was also reported from Copenhagen that Germany was already preparing for the incorporation of Poland into the Reich. On September 10th the citizens of Lwow, the third largest town in Poland, were being appealed to to resist any attack on the city. Lwow is far to the south-east of Warsaw, being only 100 miles from the then Polish-Soviet border. On September 12th Lodz, a large centre about 40 miles due south of Warsaw was threatened ; and the Germans had cut the railway between Warsaw and Bialystok (important centre 50 miles from the East Prussian border). On the 13th it was significantly announced that a train carrying Polish officials had been bombed near Lublin (which is about 150 miles south-west of Warsaw) while communications with Rumania, particularly between Lwow and Stanislawow, were being attacked from the air incessantly and the Rumanian frontier was closely guarded to control refugees entering the country.

By the 14th the closing scenes of a bloody tragedy were being enacted. The world was horrified by stories of gross German brutalities—civilian populations were openly massacred. One inhuman brute of a German tank officer

calmly admitted in an interview—"We have found it impossible to take prisoners because of the fear that they might get behind the tanks. We have had to shoot everyone at sight as we have no one to take charge of prisoners. Thus we have hardly taken any prisoners at all. We have had to shoot everyone."

The only excuse the Germans had to give was that they were "making every effort to finish Poland as quickly as possible" and they sent out wireless messages to the Poles and rained leaflets on them advising them to surrender quickly, 'otherwise the whole country and the entire population would be completely destroyed.

On September 15th news came out in concrete form that Russia was mobilizing, and at the same time, the question of Poland's collapse was being openly discussed; German fears of Russia's intentions being also mentioned.

The following day it was stated that the "Polish Government is now in the Lwow area and is maintaining constant contact with the different departments and is exchanging regular service despatches with the High Command and various centres of resistance." As Lwow is but a little over 100 miles from the Rumanian border, they were obviously ready for their "get away."

At 6 a.m. (B.S.T.) on the 17th Soviet troops crossed the Polish border and by the afternoon the Polish Government were safely inside Rumania.

On the same day the Germans claimed the occupation of Brest Litovsk, famous in history, and some 200 miles to the east of Warsaw.

With the entry of Soviet troops, the Russian Government informed the Polish Ambassador in Moscow that the Red Army had been ordered to advance into Poland to safeguard Soviet interests there and also to protect the White Russian

and Ukrainian minorities; while a Soviet Note, signed by M. Molotov, the Premier and Commissar for Foreign Affairs, pointed out that Russia's action did not in any way affect their neutrality in the conflict, but had been necessitated by the fact that the former treaties were now invalid since the Polish State no longer existed and the whereabouts of the Polish Government were unknown. It was also stated that the Soviet were endeavouring to restore peace and order in Eastern Poland, "which is no longer guaranteed in consequence of the defection of the former Polish State and the flight of the Polish Government." It was also pointed out in the Soviet Note that "The Polish-German war has revealed the rottenness of the Polish State and its Government —Poland has lost all her industrial districts and cultural centres. Warsaw as capital no longer exists and the Polish Government has broken up. It no longer shows any signs of life and this means that the Polish State and its government actually no longer exists. In consequence, the Agreements signed between the Soviet Union and Poland have become invalid."

The first point we must analyse from the above was whether Poland was "stabbed in the back." This charge can fairly easily be replied to by a study of situation inside Poland when the Russian advance took place. The position of the fighting up to September 17th I have quoted above was culled from current newspaper reports and it can be easily realized that, as an ally was defending herself, they erred in favour of that ally by trying to emphasise that she was still holding out against great odds; but these reports could not hide the fact that the Germans were advancing at an amazing speed, even for modern warfare, from the North, from the West and from the South; that almost from the very start of the war Germany had complete control

of the air and could therefore attack Polish strategic points at will and that very early in the struggle the Polish Government realized the game was up, or it would not have moved so quickly towards its ultimate destination—Rumania. On this point, granting that the Polish Government was bad, no elected body of men (unless they were in league with the enemy—and semi-Fascist though they were that charge cannot be laid against members of the Polish Government) would have moved so fast unless they knew that they could not possibly stem the tide of invasion. It also should be noted that the Government must have been in the process of crossing over into Rumania, or had already done so, when the Russians advanced, or an attempt would surely have tried to call on the Russians to desist. So one cannot but admit that, in the words of M. Molotov, "the Government had ceased to exist." Without a recognised government how then can a state continue to exist?—especially as there is no record of any attempt having been made to set up another one during Poland's 17-day war. Warsaw said that a Polish Government, representing the country, ruled there. Only a very gallant mayor surrounded by equally gallant citizens, reinforced by handfuls of regular Polish troops, continued to put up a magnificent struggle, which however was carried on only for Warsaw. not for Poland as a whole.

Nowhere has it also been proved (though for some time after September 17th great efforts were made by Russia's enemies to do so) that there was any arrangement between Germany and Russia for the carve-up of Poland during the signing of their pact. The Germans were profoundly shocked when they learned that the Red Army was on the move and that they themselves could not advance right up to the Russian border and also join up with Rumania in

the South—a move which the Russians were careful to forestall.

The Russian decision was in fact excellently timed—if they had advanced a day or two earlier they might have been charged with altering the course of the war; if they had advanced a day or two later their fellow-countrymen in Eastern Poland would have been at the mercy of the Nazis —and as there were considerable Jewish populations there, they would have fared worse even than they did under the Polish Government.

And the last point I would make is only too clear—in view of what happened on June 22nd, 1941. With greater insight than most, the Russians realized that sometime or other they would become the object of Fascist aggression—they had not forgotten Hitler's theories about "Lebensraum."

Mr. Winston Churchill, who more than any other statesman of his time, has grasped "the shape of thinge to come," despite his antipathy towards the Communist régime, showed great insight into the whole situation when he said in a broadcast of October 1st, 1939:—

> "We could have wished that the Russian armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland, instead of as invaders. But that the Russian armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace. At any rate the line is there, and an Eastern Front has been created which Nazi Germany does not dare assail. When Herr von Ribbentrop was summoned to Moscow last week it was to learn the fact, and to accept the fact, that the Nazi designs upon the Baltic States and upon the Ukraine must come to a dead stop."

At the end of September, following talks between von

Ribbentrop and M. Stalin in Moscow, the new boundary was finally fixed and a new pact between Germany and Russia was signed on the establishment of peace and order in Poland and the promotion of peace (which will be referred to in another chapter). The Germans got less out of Poland than they expected. They were denied the Polish-Ruthenian border and a common frontier with Rumania and also important oil deposits and a number of valuable minerals.

When the new Soviet-German pact was being concluded reactionary elements found material for fresh outcry against the USSR after the announcement on the 23rd that the Estonian Foreign Minister was visiting Moscow. It was at first thought that his visit was in connection with a trade agreement, then the news flashed across the world's press that the Russians were making "demands" on Estonia. An agreement was quickly come to between the two countries. Estonia agreeing to give Russia the right to maintain naval bases and several aerodromes under the terms of a ten-year assistance pact: The bases and aerodromes would be occupied by strictly limited forces of the Soviet air force and army. An article of the pact stated that the agreement would not affect to any extent the sovereign rights of the contracting parties, particularly their economic systems and State organization.

The Soviet then entered into an agreement with Latvia and on October 5th it was reported from Moscow that the first article in the new Soviet-Latvian pact provided for mutual military assistance, in case of an attack or a threatened attack by any European Power. This covered the Baltic Sea coast and the land frontiers of Estonia and Lithuania. The second of five articles provided Soviet help to the Latvian Army in the form of arms and war material on advantageous

terms. Thirdly, Latvia granted the Soviet the right to establish two naval bases and build several aerodromes, according to arrangement. The Soviet were entitled to erect artillery along the coast and were allowed to keep a limited number of troops at the bases and the aerodromes, according to arrangement, but the territory remained Latvian. The remaining clauses provided that the sovereignty of both parties remained unimpaired, the pact being valid for 10 years.

Soon a Lithuanian delegation arrived in Moscow and on the 10th it was agreed that the city of Vilna and the Vilna region (seized from Lithuania by Poland in 1920) would be returned to Lithuania. The pact also provided for mutual assistance including military assistance, "in the event of aggression or menace of aggression against the USSR or Lithuanian territory on the part of any European Power." Article 4 of the Pact declared that the USSR and Lithuania undertook jointly to effect the protection of Lithuanian boundaries. For this purpose the Soviet were granted the right to maintain at their own expense at certain points in Lithuania, established by mutual agreement, Soviet land and air forces of a strictly limited strength.

While these agreements were greeted (as was to be expected) with the usual inferences by the Rightist Press in Britain, France and America, there was great rejoicing throughout Lithuania at the return of Vilna, thousands of people cheering the Soviet Legation at Kaunas; while the Lithuanian Foreign Minister and M. Molotov exchanged cordial telegrams, the Lithuanian Minister thanking M. Stalin for his broad understanding of the aspirations of the Lithuanian people and for having established mutual

confidence and friendship between the two states by his participation in the negotiations.

Soviet moves in the Baltic had more than one repercussion in Germany; for instance they led to an extraordinary mass exodus of Germans from the three states concerned, back to their homeland.

CHAPTER III

"POOR LITTLE FINLAND"

IN the light of what has happened since June 22nd, 1941, it is now easy to understand what prompted Soviet Russia to invite a Finnish delegation to Moscow on October 8th, 1939, to discuss the taking over of certain strategic points on the Baltic to safeguard the vital importance of Leningrad, and also steps to ensure that Petsamo on the Arctic would not be used as a future base for operations against the Soviet's Far North. But with the general antagonistic attitude towards Russia at the time, Moscow's intentions were grossly misinterpreted and in the subsequent war against Finland Russia was damned in the vilest terms as a "merciless aggressor" in "bullying a small and weak neighbour into submission," and she was also accused of ambitions similar to Germany's for world power. It was even said that Finland was but a step towards control of Scandinavia and that the battle for Finland was in fact the battle for Narvik! Never in the history of Europe had a nation been more scandalously libelled and never had so much mistaken sympathy gone out towards a country such as Finland which was Fascist in outlook, as the world now knows.

Let us first examine the proposals that Russia put to Finland—proposals put before the Helsinki delegates in the most straightforward fashion, proposals that were not backed up by threats of force and if agreed to, would have saved much shedding of innocent blood.

The Russians, fully aware that sooner or later they must almost surely be involved in the European struggle, felt they must ensure the safety of Leningrad which was within shelling distance from Finnish territory and also take extra precautions for the safeguarding of their naval base at Kronstadt at the entrance to the gulf leading to Leningrad. They therefore wanted the Finnish-Soviet frontier moved back some little distance. In addition they asked for a lease of the port of Hango on the Gulf of Finland some 60 miles west of Helsinki for the construction of a naval base. This was also of vital importance for the defence of Leningrad; its possession would do much in preventing the approach of a hostile fleet. The Soviet also required a number of small islands near Leningrad, while on the Arctic she asked for a peninsula overlooking the port of Petsamo, which in time of war could be used as a hostile base to threaten the White Sea and Murmansk. In return she was willing to give up territory much larger in area than she herself was asking for—in Soviet Karelia, and also to arrange a mutual assistance pact.

It is important to stress two points :—

(*a*) That Russia showed her peaceful intentions by asking for strategic points purely for *defensive reasons* —for instance, she did not want to take possession of the all-important Aaland Islands, with which she could have dominated the Baltic; and

(*b*) Hango over which the negotiations reached a

deadlock was of no practical use to Finland if her future intentions were to be peaceful.

It is also important to note that if Finland had accepted Russia's proposals there was no question of her independence being interfered with. Except for the possibility that Finland might at some future date be used as a jumping-off place for an aggressor against the Soviet Union, Russia was not at all interested in her internal affairs; she had simply to make sure that if and when the time came for an enemy Power to use Finland as a base, Leningrad and Murmansk would be given the best chances possible to defend themselves.

The negotiations dragged on and it eventually became apparent that though Russia's other requests, in the Finns' opinion, did not affect their integrity, Helsinki felt that the giving up of Hango did, and there is reason to believe that she was strongly encouraged in this attitude by interests outside Finland. At this point something should be said about the Finish Government. The Finnish Parliament itself amounted to very little—in fact during the fateful weeks of the Moscow negotiations it was not summoned at all. The real power in the land was the "Schutz Corps," definitely pro-German and pro-Fascist, and for years violently antagonistic towards Soviet Russia. And the figure that overshadowed everyone in Finland was Field-Marshal Mannerheim, aristocrat, violently anti-Red, out-and-out Fascist and afterwards a friend of Hitler. He it was who was the power behind the scenes and, with a number of others of the same kidney, really ruled the country. He was at any time ready to throw in his lot with Germany and this the Russians knew only too well. If Russia had not got the bases she required, it can now be well imagined what would have happened to Leningrad and Murmansk when Mannerheim

and Co. eventually did show their hand on the Germans' treacherous attack in June 1941.

Before dealing with the war itself I should also like to point out at this stage that when finally Finland sued for peace in March 1940 she was given the most generous terms possible. The Finns were completely beaten and if it had been Hitler who had won the war he would most certainly have overrun the country. The Russians did not; they were content to renew their requests more or less on the same terms as before (and although they had lost considerably in men and materials, the Russians did not even demand an indemnity from the Finns which they might easily have done).

Finally the negotiations broke down completely and the Finnish delegates left Moscow on November 13th. Thereafter the Soviet carefully considered the position and after a series of frontier incidents (which owing to the strict censorship that prevailed at the time and the hopeless anti-Russian attitude of the majority of the world press were difficult to follow the why and wherefor of) the leaders at Moscow, who were probably in receipt of certain information that caused them grave concern, decided that peaceful means having failed (though they had shown the utmost patience) it was essential that the whole position must be rectified even by force of arms. Therefore hostilities from the Karelian Isthmus (against the Mannerheim Line) to the Arctic Ocean started on November 30th.

That date was not only the start of Soviet-Finnish War but also of a war of a different nature. The world press, with few exceptions, combined in a violently anti-Soviet campaign, giving the most distorted picture of the fighting —a state of affairs that has probably never been paralleled in the history of modern warfare. In the first place, official

Russian *communiqués* were more or less ignored and newspaper correspondents surged in on Helsinki and other centres round the Baltic and proceeded to send off the most amazing tissue of lies. All these reporters from the start were consistent in one thing, that they showed the Russians up in the poorest light possible. Their stories were full of the gravest inaccuracies and this can only be explained by the fact that the Finns never let these correspondents anywhere near the fighting (in fact there were some who were in Finland throughout the war and never were anywhere near a battle), Helsinki imposed a most rigorous censorship on any reports leaving the country and the press representatives had to depend on official *communiqués* and statements which seldom contained a word of truth. This sort of thing went on right up to the last, so that when finally the Finns had to sue for peace, the world was staggered by the news, for it was still understood that the Finns would be able to continue the fight.

Here is but one example of the sort of thing that went on. On January 5th, 1940, the "Manchester Guardian" quoted the Finnish radio as saying that General Meretskov, Soviet General in command of the campaign, had been sentenced to death. A week later "Reuters" reported from Moscow that he had been elected to the Executive Committee of the Leningrad Soviet. On February 23rd the "News Chronicle" said he was directing attacks on the Mannerheim Line, while that very day the "Daily Herald" stated that the general and his staff had been shot. Two days later the "Daily Mail" said he had disappeared and there was "little doubt that he has been executed." But on March 22nd "Reuters" reported from Moscow that he had been decorated and afterwards this brilliant general was made a

"Hero of the Soviet Union." This last report could not be denied!

Under the most appalling weather conditions, the Russians carried on their war—it was the coldest winter within living memory—and as has now been proved by military strategists of the highest standing they conducted it brilliantly, especially their attacks against the Mannerheim Line, which had been prepared with the greatest care for a number of years, and which they broke through by frontal assault.

It is interesting to recall that in the course of the Soviet-Finnish struggle the Western Democracies almost went to war on Finland's behalf. Mr. Chamberlain on March 11th told the House of Commons that both the French and British Governments had sent and were continuing to send valuable material assistance to the Finnish forces and that the British and French Governments had already informed the Finnish Government that they were prepared, in response to an appeal from them for further aid, to proceed immediately and jointly, to the help of Finland, using all available resources at their disposal. It is also interesting to note the "valuable material assistance" took the form of 101 planes, 114 guns of all kinds, 185,000 shells, 100 Vickers guns, 400 marine mines, 50,000 hand-grenades, 15,700 aircraft bombs, 800 sets of signalling equipment, 200 anti-tank rifles, 60,000 respirators, 100,000 greatcoats, 100,000 battle-dress suits, 10,000 anti-tank mines, 48 ambulances and also large quantities of small arms ammunition and other items—all of which were so badly needed in France not long afterwards.

Soon after the start of hostilities the Russians gained some important objectives. They occupied Petsamo in the Far North, pushed the border about 40 miles away from Leningrad and made a considerable penetration into

Finland's waist-line. Then followed a period of quiet, when owing to severe winter conditions, operations were impossible, though considerable pressure was kept up on the Mannerheim Line to prevent the shifting of Finnish troops northward. About the middle of January, a "softening-up" of the Finnish defences was started by heavy artillery along most parts of the line, and there were considerable bombing raids on vital points. (And it must be pointed out the great care taken to save the civilian population. This has since been proved although the world press at the time spread the most fantastic tales of the "slaughter" of innocent civilians). After long military prepartaion the Red Army started their move against the Mannerheim Line on February 11th and under the most trying circumstances gradually eliminated one strong point after another. By clever moves elsewhere, the Finns were kept in a continual state of bewilderment as to the Russians' exact intentions, but all the time the key-point was the Mannerheim Line and gradually the Red Army eliminated it, till finally the Finns were beaten to a standstill and they collapsed on March 12th.

By the treaty terms, the Soviet got the Finnish part of the Karelian Isthmus, with the town of Viborg and Viborg Bay; the western and northern shores of Lake Ladoga with three towns. Also a number of islands in the Gulf of Finland and some adjacent territory. Helsinki agreed to lease the peninsula of Hango and its territorial waters for a period of 30 years. On the Arctic the Soviet left Petsamo to the Finns, Finland undertaking not to establish on her northern coasts military or naval ports or to maintain naval craft of any size there, and the USSR received the right of freight transit to Norway and Sweden across the Petsamo region and the establishment of an air service. There were also provisions for the construction of

certain communications and renewal of trade and economic relations between the two countries.

As I have stated already the USSR did not ask for an indemnity, they behaved with the utmost courtesy (for instance, before leaving Petsamo not only did the Red soldiers carry out repairs to damaged buildings but even swept the streets) and they did not celebrate their victory with any scenes of rejoicings but quietly went on repairing the damage in men and material they had themselves suffered.

Be it also noted that the Soviet afterwards held out the hand of friendship to Finland when, to quote one example, even as late as June 1941, when the Finns were experiencing food difficulties, orders were given for the immediate despatch of large quantities of wheat from Russia. And the USSR did this even at a time when the Soviet Press was able to disclose that the Finns were breaking the treaty by allowing German troops to mass within their country.

I shall conclude with a quotation from the "Izvestia" contained in a leading article published on March 14th, 1940, which gives a good idea of how the Russians viewed the Finnish War :—

> "The Treaty means something more than the immediate cessation of hostilities between the Soviet Union and Finland. It eliminates an anti-Soviet war base which for decades was prepared by our enemies with such diligence at the very gate of Leningrad. It simultaneously strengthens the security of the entire coast of the Gulf of Finland and the Murmansk railway—this most important artery of our north, and Murmansk itself. The Treaty of March 12 ensures this security not only through reasonable and just shifting of the Soviet-Finnish frontier. It simultaneously lays the foundation

for the development of stable and good neighbourly relations between the two countries.

The clauses of the Treaty concerning the transit of Soviet freights across the Petsamo region to Norway, concerning the joint construction by the Soviet Union and Finland of a new railway for the development of transit and goods between the USSR and Sweden show that the Treaty of March 12 lays a stable foundation for Soviet-Finnish economic collaboration as well. This is fully corroborated by the clause for the restoration of economic relations between the two countries and for the beginning of negotiations for a trade agreement.

Neither in spirit nor in letter does the Treaty affect in the slightest extent the independence and sovereign rights of the Republic of Finland, the independence which she received from the Soviet State 22 years ago.

The significance of the Treaty of March 12 goes far beyond the limits of the relations between the two signatories. This Treaty represents a real triumph for the peace policy of the Soviet Union. It shows firstly that the Soviet Union neither in diplomatic negotiations nor after a successful test of arms, presents even its smallest neighbours with terms incompatible with their national dignity or infringing in any way their national independence. In shows, secondly, that after presenting just demands the Soviet Union has every possibility to ensure their realisation in the shortest time, even in the most unfavourable conditions . . . . "

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS

"Up to the very last it would have been quite possible to arrange a peaceful and honourable settlement but Herr Hitler would not have it. He had evidently made up his mind to attack Poland whatever happened," declared Mr. Chamberlain in his 11 a.m. broadcast from the Cabinet Room at No. 10, Downing Street on Sunday morning, September 3rd, 1939, when he declared that a state of war existed between Britain and Germany.

What an "honourable settlement" would have been many must have wondered but after three days of waiting the decision had been taken and for better or for worse, Britain and Germany were once more in the short space of 21 years facing each other over "No Man's Land." Hardly was the broadcast over when air raid sirens whined across London. People dived for shelter and thought—was this Hitler's answer and would London soon experience the much dreaded "blitz"? But no, it was a false alarm and London remained unharmed till the Battle of Britain.

France followed with her declaration of war six hours later, the Maginot Line was manned and instead of a bloody onslaught by either side, the war on the Western Front was joined with the utmost courtesy during the weary winter months.

But if the only news of battle from the Continent came from stricken Poland, the Germans showed that they had lost none of their 1914-18 brutality at sea, for the war was hardly 24 hours old when without warning a German U-boat attacked and sunk the 13,465-ton British liner "Athenia,"

with 1400 passengers aboard—75 per cent of them women and children—200 miles west of the Hebrides. Many, including a number of Americans, lost their lives.

On the night war was declared the R.A.F. carried out the first of many reconnaissances and "leaflet raids," 6,000,000 copies of a "Note to the German People" being dropped over a wide area. The R.A.F. were again active the following afternoon, when they carried out a successful attack on vessels of the German Fleet at Wilhelmshaven and Brunsbuttel, at the entrance to the Kiel Canal.

America first came into the news after the start of war on the 6th when President Roosevelt formally proclaimed the Neutrality Act. In proclaiming the Act, he reaffirmed the ban on shipments of arms but said that the ban would not apply to raw materials. He also stated that an arms embargo would prohibit all aeroplane shipments to belligerents, regardless of existing contracts between American manufacturers and foreign governments.

The general opinion was expressed that the President was desirous of allowing national sentiment to consolidate before Congress was convinced. He was particularly anxious to avoid an acrimonious debate on foreign affairs at that stage.

At the end of the first week of War we had the start of a series of altogether misleading reports from the Western Front which now make tragic reading in view of what happened but a few months later. For instance, it was reported that French troops had "smashed through" the German defence lines near Saarbrucken and were "invading" the Saar region. But as always in time of war such reports tend to assume colossal importance and are seized upon by newspapers and "splashed" out of all reason. Thereafter for weeks similar reports appeared till at last it was realized

that neither side had any intention of throwing itself headlong at either line of fortifications.

But one report that could not afterwards be contradicted was the safe arrival, announced on September 12th, of a British Expeditionary Force in France. Men of the R.A.F. were the first to arrive and were quickly followed by Army units. From various towns and villages came news of the great welcome accorded these advance guards. Once again as in 1914 British troops were moving "somewhere in France" in the old-time goods trucks labelled "forty men —eighty horses," and French girls waved to cheering soldiers as their trains passed through the quiet countryside.

Amidst the rejoicing there appeared the first of a long series of protests against the then hopelessly managed Ministry of Information—or rather Misinformation, as it came to be called. Soon after its inception the Ministry was taken to task for considerably delaying two important items of news—the sinking of the "Athenia" and facts about a widespread air raid alarm. Fresh cause for anxiety was given newspaper editors on the night of the 12th when the Ministry first approved for publication an announcement that British troops were in France, then less than an hour later withdrew the sanction and then at 2-55 a.m. came the announcement that the Ministry did, after all, sanction the release of the news! Many months were to pass before British newspaper editors were to be relieved of periodic headaches, thanks to the antics of the Ministry.

Hitler in his first big speech after the outbreak of war devoted himself to a violent attack on Britain and France. There was nothing unusual in this but it was curious that he should do so when he was about to embark on his great "peace offensive," trying to persuade the Allies that with Poland beaten, there was really no use in carrying on the

struggle. For his attack on the Allies Hitler chose to honour the people of Danzig with his eloquence. He inveighed against the Western Powers for "inciting" Poland to defy Germany, and to reject his "modest" demands for the return of Danzig and for a road through the Corridor. With characteristic bombast he declared that Germany was prepared to fight as long as Britain wanted war. In reply Mr. Chamberlain declared in the Commons that nothing had occurred to deter His Majesty's Government from achieving their purpose which was to redeem Europe from the perpetual recurring fear of German aggression. Those who still had suspicions of Chamberlain and his "appeasement" policy of but a few weeks before were relieved by these words.

Von Ribbentrop went to Moscow at the end of September and an agreement was finally come to between the German and Russian Governments over the dissolution of Poland. It was also agreed that the two governments would extend their joint efforts to end the war and if it continued, the onus of responsibility would be placed on Britain and France.

The Russians' view was that the beginning of the war lay as far back as the Munich Pact with the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia at which time they had offered full support (which was refused) to Czechoslovakia and the Western Democracies. They therefore felt that the origin of the war was the responsibility of the Governments of Britain and France.

The first week of October saw a spate of rumours as to Hitler's plea for peace and at last he outlined his proposals when he addressed the Reichstag on the sixth.

"Although it may be thought weakness," he declared, "I am going to make a few more peace proposals." If

they were not considered, he added, Germany would then fight.

Enumerating the German Government's claims, Hitler placed them under five heads :—

> Adequate settlement of the German frontiers, in accordance with ethnological and social conditions ;
>
> The various races throughout German territory and throughout south-eastern Europe "to be put in order" ;
>
> An attempt at the settlement of the Jewish question ;
>
> The rebuilding of commercial relations with all countries ; and
>
> The building up of a Polish State whose neutrality would be guaranteed by Germany and Russia.

Germany and Russia, he declared, would tolerate no interference in Poland. The object of this war was European security.

For that purpose he proposed a conference of European Powers, to be preceded by some form of disarmament so that the threat of force would be absent.

Regarding the future in eastern Europe, Germany and Russia had agreed upon a scheme for the interchange of populations in order to remove frontier difficulties.

Common Soviet-German action was natural, in view of their identical opinion on the situation. It could not be concluded from this that Soviet-German principles were identical. Germany would stay as she was and so would Russia.

Hitler declared that he had no demands to make against Britain and France. He renounced any further claims, with the exception of Germany's colonial claims.

These however, he said, were not meant to be taken as an ultimatum ; he characterized them as "a demand for

political justice." Britain had worked against German interests. Throughout his life he himself had worked for an Anglo-German understanding.

Hitler's declaration fell completely flat. For one thing the people of Britain and France had been prepared for it for days in the many conjectures that had been made regarding it in speeches and in the Press. Within a few hours M. Daladier replied when, addressing the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, he declared that France and Britain were fighting to end the menace to Europe's peace and the necessity of mobilization every six months. A few days later the British Premier also said "no," stating that Hitler's proposals were based on the recognition of his conquests and his right to do what he pleased with the conquered.

Then followed wild stories that Hitler was preparing for a great offensive on the Western Front but like the earlier French "break-through" these were baseless.

If there were no moves of consequence on the Western Front there was plenty doing at sea, the U-boats, which had taken up their positions before the war started, carrying on an unremitting fight against shipping, even including that of neutrals. Their second big success was the battleship "Royal Oak," which, it was announced on October 14th, had been sunk with considerable loss of life. This had followed the sinking of the aircraft-carrier "Courageous." The "Royal Oak" was lost as a result of a very audacious act by the U-boat commander, who with remarkable skill and daring, penetrated the defences of Scapa Flow and torpedoed the vessel which was at anchor.

What was hailed as the Allies' first victory—it was in the diplomatic sphere—came when on October 19th there was signed at Ankara an Anglo-French-Turkish Treaty of Mutual Assistance. The pact provided that Britain and

France would go to the assistance of Turkey if she was the victim of aggression by any European Power, or if any European Power precipitated a conflict in the Mediterranean in which Turkey should be involved. Turkey for her part agreed to aid Britain and France if aggression by any European Power led to hostilities in the eastern Mediterranean or if Britain and France were involved in a war as a result of their guarantees to Rumania and Greece. The Protocol provided that Turkey would not be compelled to take action under the treaty if such action would involve her in a war with Soviet Russia. In this connection it was revealed that there had been attempts at a parallel treaty between Turkey and Russia but Ankara would not agree to certain of the points put forward by Moscow. It was stated, however, that the relationship between the two countries continued to be on a friendly basis.

At the end of October important news came from America when the U.S. Senate, after one of the stormiest debates in its history, passed the Neutrality Bill. The measure as passed by the Senate ended the embargo on the shipment of arms to belligerents and established a limited "cash and carry" system for purchases of war materials by them. The decision received a rousing reception and, as the "New York Times" remarked, "By voting to restore to the Democracies their unquestioned right under international law to purchase in our markets weapons for self-defence the Senate has taken a step which will enable those nations to bring the war to a swifter conclusion and which will be to our advantage as well as theirs." A week later the bill had become law and already large orders were being placed by the Allies for planes and equipment.

That Holland and Belgium were becoming gravely worried about Germany's future intentions was reflected in

a joint peace appeal issued by Queen Wilhelmina and King Leopold following a conference at The Hague on November 6th. This appeal was replied to by the usual lying statements from Berlin that Germany had no intention of violating the neutrality of either Holland or Belgium ; and by France and Britain, that the war must continue till Nazism be crushed.

November was a bad month for Allied shipping culminating in the loss of the 17,000-ton armed merchant cruiser "Rawalpindi," which fought a gallant but hopeless battle against the German pocket battleship "Deutschland" and another enemy warship ; but in the middle of December the "Rawalpindi" was avenged by the destruction of the German pocket battleship "Admiral Graf Spee" off Montevideo, capital of Uruguay. Crippled in her action with British warships the "Graf Spee" sought refuge in Montevideo, and the attention of the world was momentarily diverted from the Soviet-Finnish War. which consistently held the headlines that month. The British vessels, although carrying guns very much lighter than their adversary, joined battle immediately the German was sighted. A running fight ensued in which the British ships brilliantly outmanœuvred and repeatedly hit the "Graf Spee," and she limped into Montevideo with many dead and injured. The world waited in suspense as a strongly reinforced British squadron held the raider a virtual prisoner. The Uruguayan Government, at first in a quandary as to what to do with their unwelcome visitor, at last ordered it to quit or be interned. Then came the ignominious end, when the captain of the "Graf Spee" realizing the impossibility of breaking through the naval cordon, scuttled the vessel, to be followed by the news of the captain's suicide and also the fact that the crack 33,000-ton German liner "Columbus" had scuttled herself in the Atlantic to avoid capture by a

British destroyer. It was not surprising that the agitated New York manager of the North German Lloyd exclaimed "My God, it is just one blow after another," when journalists gave him the news; especially as the sinking of the "Columbus" brought the number of German vessels scuttled to avoid capture up to 23, with a total tonnage of nearly 140,000. In addition the Allies had captured 19 ships, totalling 88,000 tons.

Close on the heels of the news of the "Graf Spee" came the gratifying information that Canadian troops had landed in Britain. "Thousands of Canadians streamed ashore from great liners," said a news agency correspondent, describing the scene at the port of disembarkation, "while warships and planes guarded one of the greatest concentrations of troops since the war began."

The first Christmas of the war, to quote a report from Paris, "passed with absolute calm" (it could hardly be otherwise, for except for occasional raids, all had been very quiet on the Western Front), and apparently there was no sign of fraternization as in Christmas, 1914. Till the New Year the only war news of note was from the Soviet-Finnish front and in this newspaper readers were treated to a succession of extraordinary reports (which were given out as Gospel truth) that the Finns had "invaded" Russian territory, surrounded and "routed" large bodies of Soviet troops, and altogether seemed well on the way to victory. (This amazing period of gross inaccuracies has been referred to in another chapter).

The first big news from Britain in 1940 was the Cabinet reshuffle in which Mr. L. Hore-Belisha, much to everyone's surprise, ceased to be Secretary for War (Mr. Oliver Stanley taking his place). Lord Macmillan gave place to Sir John Reith as Minister for Information and Sir Andrew Rae

Duncan became President of the Board of Trade. The Hore-Belisha question raged for weeks. He had carried out many far-reaching changes during his term of office and great surprise was expressed in Britain and abroad. The general opinion in London was that there had been an accumulation of grievances and friction at the War Office which were settled in too frank a fashion by Hore-Belisha and general resentment among the Army chiefs eventually saw him out.

In mid-January there was greater air activity than ever before over the coasts of Britain but practically in all cases no bombs were dropped while R.A.F. long-distance planes traversed Austria, Bohemia and eastern Germany and dropped pamphlets on Vienna and Prague. Simultaneously there was fresh massing of German troops on the Dutch and Belgian frontiers but, along with the sudden activity in the air, the tension gradually decreased and Finland and her "gallant struggle" again led the news.

The first big event from the Middle East was in the second week of February when it was announced that the second Australian Imperial Force and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force had arrived at Suez under the command of Lt.-Gen. Sir Thomas Blamey. The term "Second Australian Imperial Force" was used to distinguish it from that which fought in the last war. It was one of the biggest at that time to cross the seas in a single unit and was one more sign that the Allies had full command in that particular sphere.

Apart from the close of the Soviet-Finnish War (see Chapter III) and the resignation of the French Cabinet (referred to later in this book) the main interest in Europe during March was centred round the meeting between Mussolini and Hitler on the Brenner on the 18th which started a series of wild conjectures. These gave rise to reports

that M. Molotov, the Soviet Premier and Foreign Minister, would visit Berlin to reach some sort of an "understanding" with the Axis. But needless to say Molotov's visit did not materialize and there were rejoicings over a "diplomatic reverse" for the Nazis. The end of the month saw the worsening of Soviet-French relations. First of all, the French Government asked that M. Souritz, the Soviet Ambassador in Paris, should be relieved of his post because he was "no longer *persona grata*" with the French Government. It was explained that the French considered a telegram signed by Souritz and sent to M. Stalin on the occasion of the signing of the Soviet-Finnish peace treaty an "intrusion by the Ambassador into France's internal politics." The passage taken exception to stated—"Thanks to the wisdom of the Soviet Government and the valiant Red Army, the plans of the British and French warmongers, who were engaged in kindling war in Northern Europe, have suffered a set-back." The French Government prohibited the despatch of the telegram, and the Soviet replied to their protest that they could see no real reason why the French Government could no longer consider M. Souritz *persona grata* as in the telegram the French Government was not even mentioned. Since, however, the French Government had specifically raised the question of confidence in regard to M. Souritz the Soviet had relieved him of his post.

Two days later, in a speech to the joint session of the Supreme Soviet Federal and National Councils, Molotov had a few stinging remarks to make with regard to the Finnish War. Hostile acts against the Soviet Union, he declared, were responsible for the state of Soviet-French relations, and then he went on to say—"The policy pursued by the Soviet Union is obviously not palatable to the British and French, whose nerves are not in good order—. War against Finland

was not simply a clash with the Finnish troops. We were fighting not merely Finnish troops but the combined forces of the imperialists of a number of countries, including Britain and France. Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons on March 19th expressed malicious regret at the failure to prevent the end of the Finnish War* thus turning his peace-loving imperialist soul inside out to the whole world." The Finnish war, M. Molotov continued, was indeed a welcome opportunity for a number of imperialist States to embark on a war against the Soviet Union. Despite all these efforts, the strength and determination of the Red Army had converted the war into a glorious victory. M. Molotov also pointed out that "as a result of this war the fact remains that Britain and certain other imperialist States have taken part in a war against the Soviet Union. It is not the defence of small nations or the protection of the members of the League of Nations that explains the help given to Finland by the British and French rulers. The real reason was that Finland was a ready-made base for military operations against the Soviet Union. A week after the negotiations with Finland started the British Government expressed a desire to act as intermediary, allegedly with the idea of ending the war. When the Soviet Ambassador to Britain presented proposals

* In the House of Commons Mr. Chamberlain said the Moscow peace terms were such "as could only be accepted under dire compulsion." It was tragic to think that such a fate had befallen "so heroic a people, forced to capitulate only by the overwhelming superiority in numbers of their enemies. Nevertheless the spirit of the Finns had not been broken ; and in the work of regeneration the Allies would be to the fore in the matter of assistance." He then went on to enumerate the help given to Finland and also details of the expeditionary force which was to be sent to Finland, strongly repudiating allegations that Allied aid was insufficient and emphasizing that "the Nazis were primarily responsible for Finland's downfall."

—which were later accepted by Finland—the British Government declined to accept them and thus obtain peace in Finland.

M. Molotov also said that the Anglo-French Press interpreted the treaty as the destruction of Finland. This was unadulterated nonsense. "The truth is that the USSR had the power to occupy the whole of Finland but did not use this power as any other big Power would have done, but we confined ourselves to the minimum. . . ."

Addressing the Central Council of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations in London on April 4th Mr. Chamberlain said that when war was declared, they had expected the Germans, by reason of their initial superiority in arms, to immediately deliver a smashing attack. But that attack had not come. Hitler had "missed the bus" . . . Five days later, in the early hours of April 9th, German troops began the occupation of Denmark and Norway was being treacherously attacked from the sea and 'y air—the war had really started.

CHAPTER V

HITLER STRIKES NORTH

Before dealing with Hitler's invasion of Denmark and Norway let us recall the general attitude of the Scandinavian countries towards the rest of Europe during the early stages of the war. All, with of course the exception of Finland, who could have kept out of war if she had wished, showed the same determination as in World War I to maintain, for obvious reasons, their neutrality. They had no advantage

to gain in being linked up with Hitler or anybody else; their armies and navies though quite up-to-date were small and thereby hopelessly weak in comparison with the big Powers. But Finland was the fly in the ointment, thanks to her Fascist tendencies, and when Russia was forced to act against her, there was a grand flutter in the Scandinavian dovecot and, Sweden in particular, made a great display at defending her Boden Line against the possible onward march of the dreaded "Reds." This system of fortifications extended approximately parallel with the Swedo-Finnish frontier and after the start of the war and particularly when the first negotiations between Russia and Finland commenced, it was hastily modernized and extended. The Stockholm correspondent of a London paper spoke of scores of new pill-boxes and emplacements, of "lavish stocks" of anti-aircraft guns, of new heavy artillery commanding the "potential foes' meagre railway communications," and of a protective "forward terrain" 50 miles deep. During the height of the scare that the Russians would not stop at Finland but would charge ahead straight for Narvik, it was pointed out that to reach the Swedish border, they would have to advance about 200 miles through the practically roadless desolation of Northern Finland. It was also stated that as well as having a small but efficient army and for the size of the country, a good navy, the Swedes had their own armaments industry that had been greatly developed in the years preceding the war, the Bofors factory alone being one of the best known in the world.

And so the Swedes looked anxiously towards the East when they should have been paying more attention elsewhere. (As for the Norwegians, they shared the same needless fears regarding Russia's intentions, especially with Soviet troops practically up against their frontier in the extreme

North, near the Petsamo region).

Therefore the anxious Scandinavians huddled together for a conference in mid-October. The venue was Stockholm and in addition to the King of Sweden, the Kings of Norway and Denmark were present, while President Kallio represented Finland, which it will be remembered was ceded to Tzarist Russia in 1809 by Sweden, on her decline as an aggressor nation. The Foreign Ministers of the four countries also attended. Whatever really happened behind the scenes was never disclosed but it would appear that neither Sweden, Norway or Denmark tried to bring any great pressure on the Finns to adopt a more reasonable attitude towards Russia's demands. All that came out officially was a general desire for peace, while the Finnish President piously moaned over the radio at the conclusion of the confernece :—

"Finland is placing her trust in God and the justice of her cause. The peace-loving Finnish people will unanimously defend their independence while only desiring to live in peace on their own soil. They will hope to the last that her powerful neighbour (the Soviet) will respect the pacific agreements made with Finland. These include conditions expressly providing for a peaceful settlement of possible differences. Finland stands by her undertakings."

The Soviet-Finnish war started and for long the Swedish Government in particular were in a quandary as to how to act. Even as late as January 7th, according to a message from Stockholm, it was stated that the question of Sweden's attitude to Finland would dominate the discussions when the Swedish Parliament reassembled the next day, though "owing to the delicacy of the position," it was thought unlikely that the debates would be made public. It was also stated that there was "no real division of opinion on

the question of whether maximum help should be given to the Finns and the only real differences expressed were whether the government should continue their policy of merely refraining from hampering voluntary aid, or should openly join in the war."

But the Soviet Government had a thing or two to say about Swedish and Norwegian interest in Finland, despite their alleged neutrality. According to the Tass Agency, in a message issued on January 15th, Russia had protested to both countries over what she described as their "anti-Soviet policy." It was stated that newspapers closely connected with the governments of both countries and certain personages with the connivance and support of the Swedish and Norwegian auhorities had begun a widespread campaign against the USSR. The Soviet Government declared that the actions of the Norwegian and Swedish Governments not only contradicted their proclaimed policy of neutrality but they might lead to undesirable complications and disturb their normal relations with the USSR. It was added that in view of this, the Soviet Ministers in Sweden and Norway were authorized to make appropriate representations. The Soviet Minister in Sweden on January 5th delivered a declaration to the Swedish Foreign Minister, stating that during December newspapers hostile to the USSR, "headed by a newspaper which is closely connected with the Government, carried on an impermissible campaign against the Soviet Union which could only be explained if Sweden were in a state of war with the USSR, or preparing for war against the USSR."

According to the Moscow radio, the replies to the protests could not be considered satisfactory. The attitude of Norway, and especially Sweden, as revealed in their answers only proved their lack of resistance against the

Powers that exerted pressure to involve the Scandinavian countries in the conflict.

The commentator went on to say that a number of recruiting officers had been active in Sweden and that the number of volunteers sent by them to Finland had reached thousands. Swedish officials and members of the army, such as General Linder, went to Finland. Sweden was supplying Finland with arms and equipment from abroad and was allowing these supplies to pass through Sweden. Regarding Norway, the commentator said that a special division to be sent to Finland was being formed at Oslo and arms had been sent to Finland. The Norwegian papers had been running an anti-Soviet campaign which would give rise to complications in the relations of both the countries.

To these statements the Norwegian Government replied that the Soviet's allegations were "based on an erroneous supposition," adding that "no assistance was being sent to Finland by the authorities." Volunteers alone had gone and "no transport of war material had taken place so far." Sweden's reply stated that "there were no official measures that could form any reason for accusation against the Swedish Government and that the Soviet Note was based on erroneous conceptions." The number of volunteers given in the Soviet Note was "inaccurate" and officers and soldiers of the army "had not participated in the conflict."

On the day these statements were given out it was significantly reported that "another large contingent of Swedish volunteers had left Stockholm for Finland," and the contingent included the chairman of the Swedish Social Democrat Youth Organization.

On the 16th broadcast announcers from Moscow stated that Norway and Sweden were openly assisting Finland by sending officers and men to help the Finns and that the two

countries were not taking these steps on their own initiative but on the advice of other Powers.

That Sweden felt she must climb down somewhat was evident by the statement given by her Prime Minister, M. Hansson, during a debate in the Rikstag on foreign affairs, on the 17th. While Sweden sympathized with Finland in her struggle, he declared, she was determined to defend her neutrality. "There can be no question of breaches of neutrality such as permission for transport of belligerent troops through Sweden or uses of bases in our territory," he added. In spite of the sympathy felt for Finland, "caution was necessary in order to avoid becoming a party to the conflict." There was never any question of a military coalition and there was no obligation on Sweden to go to the help of Finland. Then he added meekly: "The solidarity of the Northern States had been deeply affected by the acts of violence against one of them. This however did not indicate any hostility to the Russian people."

After a lull, the Russian "menace" to Norway and Sweden suddenly sprang to life again, on February 13th, with the highly dramatic news that plans for a "revolution" in Sweden, in which "all means would be permissible so long as they lead to the Communist goal," had been discovered at Gothenburg following raids on "Communist centres." This very colourful story was given out by the Stockholm radio, and was seized upon by the world's Press to show how "grave" was the "Red" threat to Northern Europe. The Stockholm announcer also said that "the Chief of Police had stated that among the finds was a manual of strategy and tactics for the coming revolution! Codes and the evidence of espionage activities, that provided clear evidence of treason, were also discovered."

It was also alleged that a former member of the

Communist Party had come forward and revealed how Swedish Bolsheviks had been supplied with "foreign money," and two secret wireless transmitters had been found by the police.

At the same time it was reported that, to face the Russian "threat," 70,000 soldiers were manning the Boden Line.

But though the Swedes were so prompt in announcing the discovery of the "Red plot" (nothing more of which was heard, by the way) and were manning their fortifications, when the Finns started falling back in the Karelian Isthmus and appealed to Sweden for direct military aid, Stockholm very firmly said "No." It was reported that the Finnish Government had advised Sweden that they could not hold out any longer alone and either must have two divisions of men from Sweden as "volunteers," or else apply to the Western Powers for help.

On February 16th the Swedish Prime Minister declared that his Government had on different occasions received requests from Finland for supply of necessities and on the whole these requests had been acceded to. Certain measures had been taken with regard to caring for wounded and invalids from Finland in Sweden and the transfer of civilian workmen from Sweden to Finland. During their visits to Stockholm, members of the Finnish Government had raised the question of aid by supply of men. On February 13th the Finnish Foreign Minister had raised the matter, but the policy of the Swedish Government, as approved by Parliament on January 17th, would remain unchanged.

The Prime Minister also stated that the object of collaboration between the Northern States was to "ensure neutrality and independence." There was never any question of a military coalition and there was no obligation on Sweden to go to the help of Finland. He emphasized that although

Finland had the sympathy of the Swedish Government, "caution was necessary to avoid being drawn into the conflict."

What was happening behind the scenes in Stockholm? Was it at last dawning on the Swedes that the Russians did not have any further intentions towards Scandinavia other than the settlement of the Finnish question?—and were they also doubting the genuineness of Helsinki's case?

It was also emphasised that the refusal of military aid "did not mean any change had occurred in the Swedish Government's attitude towards Finland" and "attempts made to explain the Premier's statement as a sudden and dramatic deterioration in the Swedish attitude towards the Finnish War were declared to be without foundation." But these assurances in themselves were suspicious and led one to suspect that the Finnish war was beginning to raise queries in Stockholm.

At last the attitude of the Northern Countries towards their neighbour was finally settled at a conference in Copenhagen on February 25th between the Foreign Ministers of Norway, Sweden and Denmark, when it was officially stated that it was Scandinavia's wish that the Finnish-Russian War should be ended speedily and that Finland should retain her full independence.

A *communiqué* said that on the question of neutrality they were unanimous and "rejected all assertions that this neutrality was being exercised under pressure by one side or the other." It was their intention to continue this policy impartially and independently in their relations to all States.

Within three weeks the war was over and the Finns still had their independence. Two days after the armistice a Swedish Foreign Ministry *communiqué* stated that: "In reply to a question by the Finnish Government, the Swedish

Government has declared itself ready to examine possibilities of a defensive alliance." From Oslo, it was reported that the Norwegian Foreign Minister had stated that his Government had replied in the affirmative to a question by the Finnish Government whether they were prepared to consider the possibility of establising a defensive alliance between Norway, Finland and Sweden ; while in Moscow it was understood that the Russian Government would have no objection to the conclusion of a purely defensive alliance but any combination specifically directed against the Soviet would be regarded as inconsistent with the Finnish Peace Treaty.

But the Scandinavian alliance scheme made no progress and speaking on March 24th, the Swedish Defence Minister pointed out (after saying that despite difficulties, "the goodwill to reach a conclusion would surely carry through the proposed defence alliance,") that it would be prudent not to hasten the question unduly. Finland might need to deliberate further on the question. Since Finland was the smallest and most exposed country of the "possible counter-attacking parties," the role of a member of such an alliance would involve certain consequences demanding great attention. Whether or not Sweden became a member of the alliance, her obvious need now was a powerful national defence. All available forces were being employed to that end. Broadcasting at the same time the Swedish Prime Minister stated that "it was necessary to draw attention to the danger of giving birth to popular ideas which did not correspond with the real situation . . . it was necessary to make an end once and for all to speculations suggesting that the resources of the North might be mobilized for other ends than defence against attacks on the North's peace and independence."

With such cautious observations, the question of a

Scandinavian alliance came to a close and suddenly the Northern Countries' attention was directed from the east to the south-west when towards the end of March it become increasingly evident that trouble was brewing over the export of iron ore from Sweden via Norway to Germany, which before the war imported no less than a third of her iron ore from Sweden.

Scandinavia was watching the situation with grave anxiety. It was reported that Germany was using for the transport of the ore small vessels of shallow draught which were able to hug the Norwegian coast to avoid interception. A special correspondent of one of the Stockholm papers stated from Narvik that the harbour was being used to its fullest capacity. "Loading these steamers takes longer than usual," he stated, "because they are not provided with regular loading equipment and at present German ships are 'queueing up' for loads of iron ore."

On the 29th fears were widely expressed that the Northern neutrals, especially Norway, were in an increasingly dangerous position. All newspapers carried reports of impending events in the North Sea. It was generally assumed in London that at a meeting of the Allied Supreme War Council, the members decided in favour of further action against shipments of ore from Norway to Germany. It was recognized that the cutting off of the Norwegian route would be an extremely serious blow to Germany as she would then be forced to wait at least a month until Sweden's Baltic port, Lulea, was ice-free. Moreover Narvik was only 100 miles from the iron fields, while Lulea was 250 miles distant and was connected only by a small railway.

The Berlin correspondent of a Stockholm paper reported that: "Well-informed German circles consider that events have taken a tremendously dangerous turn for neutrals,

especially Scandinavia, during the past 24 hours. The Western Powers are determined to stop iron ore reaching Germany at any cost, while Germany depends on these supplies. Without them, she would be unable to carry on the war."

That the Allies were determined to tighten the blockade against Germany was evident from a broadcast by Mr. Churchill on March 30th when, discussing the position of those neutrals who had "the misfortune to be Germany's neighbours," he declared that, while sympathizing with their plight, it would not be right for their weakness to feed the aggressor's strength. He also dealt with the Nazi barbarity at sea—ruthless attacks on isolated, unarmed vessels of those very countries with which Germany was supposed to be on friendly terms. (And in this connection, the Scandinavian countries had had more than their share of German ruthlessness).

The First Lord's broadcast was greeted with great approval in Britain and France while distrust as to Germany's intentions ran through the reactions in neutral countries.

"A sudden consideration voiced in the German Press for international law and neutrality regulations" aroused no sympathy in Scandinavia, commented a leading Stockholm paper. "Far too many Swedish ships have been sunk and far too many of Sweden's seamen drowned." Attacks by Nazi planes on Dutch shipping had also caused a wave of bitterness and indignation to sweep over Holland. But despite such comments from the Swedish press, grave fears were, at the same time, expressed in Stockholm. "We cannot overlook the possibility that another war might break out near the Scandinavian coasts," was one typical opinion.

In the first few days of April anxiety greatly increased in Scandinavia and on the third the Swedish Minister for

Defence declared—"If our territory is attacked, we must repel the aggressor with all the forces at our command," while the Norwegians, who had remained singularly quiet till then, found expression in a statement on their country's foreign policy, given in the Parliament at Oslo by Professor Koht, the Foreign Minister.

"We cannot think of any war which Norway might enter except one which might be forced on us in order to defend our independence and freedom," he declared. "We can only save ourselves from war by a policy of strict neutrality towards all sides. We have done this in our trade policy by which all questions are regulated by agreements with belligerents based on the principle that we are trying as far as possible to maintain normal trade."

"But we will defend our territorial waters against anybody who might enter them illegally. After the recent speeches of Mr. Chamberlain (in the Commons) and Mr. Churchill, I dare feel confident Britain does not intend to violate international law and our neutrality."

Turning to the war at sea, he said :—"We have lost 52 ships totalling more than 120,000 tons and 392 men have been killed. About half the number of ships were lost through mines. In at least 12 cases ships were sunk by U-boats or other warships or by bombing planes."

But the stage for the Norwegian drama was set and the first scene was the dramatic news broadcast early on the morning of April 8th when the British and French Governments announced that units of the Allied fleets had mined certain areas in Norwegian territorial waters.

It was pointed out that in the previous weeks the German campaign against merchant shipping of all nations had been intensified and pursued with even greater brutality. The number of neutral ships destroyed by German action was

over 150 and the number of neutral lives lost nearly 1000.

"It is obvious," it was stated, "that the German Government are engaged in an indiscriminate campaign of destruction throughout the waters in which their unnotified mines are laid or in which their submarines are able to operate.

"While in recent weeks the greatest losses have fallen upon neutral shipping, Allied vessels have also suffered from the adoption of the policy of destruction, a new development of which is nearly 200 air bombing attacks on British and neutral trawlers and fishing boats and the machine-gunning of their crews. Even lightships, which by international usage are treated as non-combatants, have been ruthlessly attacked with bombs.

"It is abundantly clear that the purpose behind them is pure terrorism. The Allies, on the other hand, have never destroyed nor injured a single neutral ship or taken a single neutral life. On the contrary, they have saved the lives of many innocent victims of these German outrages and rescued from drowning German airmen and submarine crews who have been guilty of the inhumanities in question.

"International law has always recognized the right of a belligerent, when its enemy systematically resorted to illegal practices, to take action appropriate to the situation created by the illegalities of the enemy. Such action, even though not lawful in ordinary circumstances, becomes and is generally recognized to become lawful, in view of the other belligerent's violation of law.

"The Allied Governments, therefore, hold themselves entitled to take such action as they may deem proper in the present circumstances. Whatever may be the actual policy which the Norwegian Government, by German threats and pressure, are compelled to follow, the Allied Governments no longer can afford to acquiesce in the present state of affairs

by which Germany obtains from Norway facilities which place the Allies at a dangerous disadvantage. They have already given notice to the Norwegian Government that they reserve the right to take such measures as they think necessary to hinder or prevent Germany from obtaining in Norway resources or facilities which, for the purpose of the war, will be to her advantage or to the disadvantage of the Allies.

"If the successful prosecution of the war now requires them to take such measures, world opinion will not be slow to realize both the necessity under which they are constrained to act and the purpose of their action.

"Their purpose in this war is to establish the principles which the smaller States of Europe would themselves wish to see prevail and upon which the very existence of those States ultimately depends. The Allies will never follow the German example of brutal violence, and any action they decide to take will always be carried out in accordance with the dictates of humanity."

The areas made dangerous by mines were defined and in conclusion the statement mentioned that these areas would not interfere with the free access of Norwegian nationals or ships to their own ports and coastal hamlets, and "in order to avoid the least possibility of Norwegian or other vessels inadvertently entering these areas before there has been time to give warning of the mines being laid, arrangements have been made for the limits of areas to be patrolled by British naval vessels until the period of 48 hours has elapsed from the laying of the first mine in each area."

The reactions to the Anglo-French decision were roughly as follows :—

In Oslo the action was described as "a bolt from the blue" and the Norwegian Government sent a "serious and

solemn " protest to London, demanding the removal of the mines and reserving all rights to take counter-measures; Paris was jubilant; Germany furious; the Dutch critical; the Italians hostile; the Americans surprised; and Swedish newspapers emphasized that Scandinavia was in great danger.

Then Germany attacked—early on the morning of April 9th a state of war existed between Germany and Norway.

The Allies immediately assured the Norwegian Government that they would extend full aid to Norway, while Germany gave her reason for invasion in a High Command *communiqué*, which stated that "in order to counteract the Allied action and to prevent a possible hostile attack against these countries, (Denmark and Norway), the German Army has taken them under its protection."

It was a typical Fascist excuse for long before any mines had been laid, the Germans must have had their preparations for invasion very far advanced; in fact, it was claimed by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons that the invasion was already in operation in certain areas before the Allies had mined the Norwegian waters.

Before we deal further with the attack on Norway, let us first consider Denmark's position on that fateful morning.

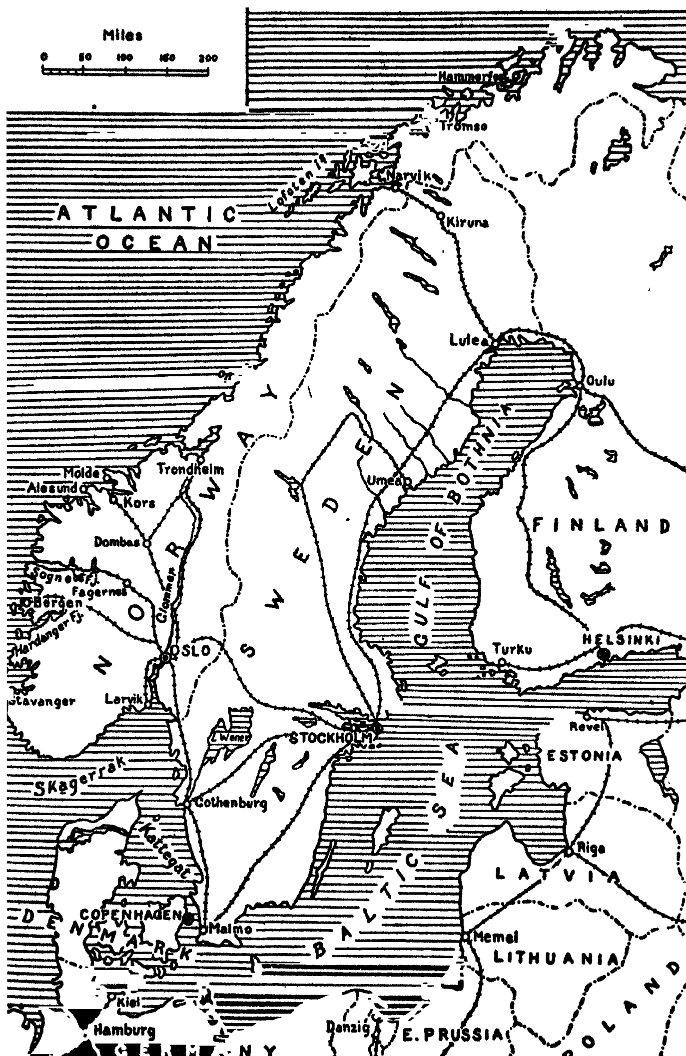
The immediate object after the German occupation of Denmark was that, by allowing her to keep her parliamentary institutions, etc., a pretence could be kept up by the Germans to show the world how well they treated a country which did not resist their demands for co-operation; but the Danes, although comparatively well off for some time under German control, gradually found fresh demands being imposed upon them, especially demands for their rich agricultural produce —but that is a story that will be told in another volume. For the present let us confine ourselves to the scene in

Copenhagen on the morning of April 9th when the Nazis so unexpectedly swooped down on Denmark's capital, and for that purpose let me quote a few extracts from an authoritative article which was published in "The Times," written by an eye-witness :—

"On the eve of the extinction of its independence Denmark was anxious, as always, about Germany's ultimate designs, but not immediately alarmed. The general impression in well-informed circles was that on balance Germany was unlikely to overrun Denmark, not so much because the two countries had concluded a non-aggression pact less than a year before but because the operation did not appear to be likely to pay. If Denmark alone were to be attacked, it was felt, this would be a sign that Germany was so desperately in need of either food or a cheap success that she had ceased to look more than six months ahead. For the rest Denmark might be invaded as the left wing of a German operation in Scandinavia aimed principally at the Swedish iron ore mines or as the right wing of an adventure in Belgium and Holland. In either event it seemed likely that German interests would be best served by keeping Denmark as a neutral screen.

"On April 8th the news of the laying of British minefields in Norwegian territorial waters spread the conviction that the next few days might well prove decisive for Scandinavia. But even the reports received during the day of German concentrations on the Jutland frontier and of naval contingents moving north-wards through the Great Belt did not make Danish authoritative circles waver from their conviction that Denmark would be excluded from the scope of whatever operations might be intended.

"At midnight under a clear, cold sky and a sickle moon, Copenhagen looked the gay, peaceful city which it has



Miles
0 50 100 150 200
Hammerfest
Tromso
Lofoten Is
Narvik
Kiruna
ATLANTIC
OCEAN
Lulea
Oulu
NORWAY
SWEDEN
GULF OF BOTHNIA
FINLAND
Trondheim
Molde
Alesund
Kors
Umea
Dombas
Sogne Fj.
Fagernes
Glommen
Bergen
Hardanger Fj.
OSLO
Turku
HELSINKI
Stavanger
Larvik
STOCKHOLM
L. Wener
Revel
ESTONIA
Skagerrak
Gothenburg
Kattegat
SEA
BALTIC
Riga
LATVIA
DENMARK
COPENHAGEN
Malmo
Memel
LITHUANIA
Kiel
Hamburg
Danzig
E. PRUSSIA
POLAND
GERMANY

always been within living memory. The next morning at about six I was awoken by a series of explosions. My first thought was that floating mines, detached from their moorings by the ice, were being destroyed; my second that a naval engagement was in progress in the Sound. The appearance of a large number of aircraft diving low over the city in groups of three and nine soon put an end to these illusions . . .

"Going down into the streets where the earliest workmen were already trudging stolidly to their work, I found sickly green leaflets scattered by the aircraft which made it abundantly clear how the land lay. Written not in Danish but in a bastard Norwegian which aroused the derision of the Danes, they stated that in order to forestall a British attack on Norway and Denmark Germany had decided to assume the protection of their neutrality for the duration of the war with the exclusive object of preventing them from being turned into a theatre of war. With this aim strong German forces had that morning taken possession of important military objectives in the two countries, and negotiations were in progress with the Danish Government with the object of ensuring the continued existence of the Danish kingdom, the maintenance of the army and fleet, the assurance of the freedom of the Danish people and the future independence of their country .

"Gradually the city began to resume its normal appearance, the cycles reappeared, and cars and trams were again on the move. Only isolated machine-gun posts at the most important cross-roads, the sentries outside the German headquarters at the Hotel Phoenix, and the coming and going of military cars and dispatch riders remained to remind one that Copenhagen, independent since

its foundation by Bishop Absalon, had been forced to capitulate to the barbarism of the Teuton.

"It was only later that it was possible to piece together what had happened that morning, and even now the sequence of events is uncertain in a number of details. There seems little doubt that Denmark was taken by relatively small numbers of men who relied on the element of surprise and on the unlikelihood that any serious resistance would be offered.

"Zero hour seems to have been at or about 5 o'clock in the morning, when the column reported in South Schleswig crossed the frontier and after encountering sporadic resistance, pushed rapidly up through Jutland towards the Skaw. Simultaneously landings were made at Middelfort on the island of Funen, near the Little Belt bridge, at Korsor and Nyborg on the Great Belt, and at Gjedser, the Danish terminus of the Warnemuende ferry. Meanwhile three small German transports steamed into Copenhagen harbour, and the first aircraft circled over the city. Shore batteries fired warning shots at the aircraft but thereafter were silent and no resistance was offered as the transports made fast alongside the Langelinie and disembarked their troops. These to the number of about 800 made straight for the Kastellet citadel, dynamited the gates, and rounded up all the garrison, who appeared to be taken completely by surprise and offered no resistance. Detachments were next sent strategic points in the nearest parts of the town including the Amalienborg Palace, where King Christian was in residence. Here the guards in their old-time bearskins offered resistance. One of them was killed and two others injured before the King, with characteristic courage, came out and ordered the cease fire in order to stop unnecessary carnage. The German troops appeared highly nervous and excitable, and there were

a number of quite unnecessary discharges, in one of which a woman had her leg blown off by a hand grenade.

"Immediately before these operations had begun the German Minister called on the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs and informed him of the German intentions. There was some delay while contact was being made with the Premier, Hr. Stauning, who was in the country, and instructions were being dispatched to the armed forces to offer no resistance. The negotiations, in which King Christian also took part, lasted throughout the greater part of the morning, and resulted in Danish acceptance under protest of the terms forced upon them. By the afternoon the streets were plastered with copies of the German proclamation and of King Christian's dignified appeal to his people ending with the moving words '*Gud bevare Danmark*.'

"The next few days left conflicting impressions on the observer. It must be remembered that the event had been foreseen by most Danes even before the war. Although the Government had always proclaimed their conviction that Germany would honour her engagements to Denmark, it was the impression of the man-in-the-street that they were whistling to keep up their courage, and there were few who believed that in the event of war the country would be left intact. There was disagreement only as to how much Germany would be likely to take; whether for instance she would occupy strategic points on the Estonian model, whether she would overrun Jutland and leave Zealand and Funen. No larger body of opinion thought that the entire country would be occupied than that nothing at all would happen . . .

"It is difficult to establish to what extent a Fifth Column played a decisive role in affairs. There seem to have been

no 'Quislings,' partly because it was unnecessary to 'quisle' in a country which, as the Nazis have always said, 'could be taken by telephone,' and partly because Fritz Clausen's Danish Nazis commanded even less of a following than those of the Norwegain traitor. On the other hand, members of the large German colony undoubtedly played prearranged roles, as did a number of German reserve officers in civilian clothes, who had obtained Danish visas in the guise of commercial travellers. Thus a member of the German Tourist Bureau in Copenhagen and a German film agent temporarily in the country accompanied the soldiers who raided the British Legation "

Thus Denmark, which had first suffered German aggression in 1864, was under Berlin's rule.

Before we deal with the campaign in Norway, let us consider two points—(a) Germany's object in invading the country and (b) the support she got from within.

As has already been shown, Germany must have laid her plans for the invasion long before the Allies' mine-laying operations took place, for an expeditionary force of the size employed could not have been assembled in a day, nor could its routes and plan of operations be so easily worked out. It is obvious that the plan had been laid well beforehand and must have been put into practice for other reasons than the Germans gave out officially. One of the Nazis' chief anxieties was naturally their supply of iron-ore, following the decisions made by the Allied Supreme Council to stop any leaks wherever possible in the blockade. These decisions were soon acted upon by considerable submarine activity in the Skagerrak and Kattegat and the sinking of more than one German iron ore vessel there must have given Berlin good cause for worry. But at the same time, surprise was

expressed that the Germans should take such drastic action on this count alone when it was considered that the Swedish Baltic port of Lulea would have been open to traffic from about the end of April, with the melting of the ice. It must be pointed out, however, that Lulea would have been far less suitable for the export of the iron ore than Narvik. Sweden's iron ore production area is in the extreme north, practically on the Norwegian border, and difficulties of transport were such that only about 50 per cent of the supply available if the Norwegian route were open could be expected to reach Germany through Sweden alone; and in addition to that, the Germans may have feared considerable British submarine penetration into the Baltic, making even the route from Lulea hazardous.

Probably, however, the overruling factor in the Germans' decision to invade Norway was to make her flank safe before launching her attack against France and also to cause a diversion just before carrying out her major operation in the West. Another point is that they may have hoped to divert large bodies of Allied troops to the Norwegian theatre but in this they were disappointed, for the British and French leaders met with storms of criticism in being so late on the Norwegian scene and even then the Allied relief force consisted of not more than two brigades of infantry, or about 4,000 men, whereas the Germans were reported to have had no less than 120,000 troops.

With regard to the second point—the assistance given to the Germans from within Norway—it has now been proved that this was very considerable and had much to do with their early successes in the southern part of the country. The chief Norwegian traitor was of course Quisling, who has given a new word to the dictionary. He was formerly an

Army officer and when Dr. Nansen went to Russia after the World War to assist the starving people, Quisling offered his services and became the great explorer's right-hand man. He made a close study of Russia and on his return to Norway bitterly criticised the new *régime*. In 1931 he became Norway's Defence Minister and afterwards formed a new party of "National Concentration." It stood for the destruction of "Marxist and revolutionary parties, the abolition of trade union supremacy in favour of free labour, an extensive scheme of relief works and measures to regulate the debts of the peasants, fishermen and municipalities." When the new party made its first appearance at the polls in 1934, it was too weak to secure a single seat in Parliament. But Quisling plotted and plotted and got around him toughs and traitors who were to give the Germans great assistance when they turned their attention north. And in addition to the use of these wretched tools, the Nazis in a thousand and one ways stooped to the most treacherous methods to obtain their ends. As one small example, the German Air Attaché, a member of the German diplomatic mission to the Norwegian Court, led the invaders against the capital—and got killed for his pains. The Norwegian campaign was indeed a masterpiece in the basest forms of modern warfare.

Reports of the first few days of fighting were extremely confused, but it was very soon evident that the Germans had laid their plans well; for instance they had been able to send troops as far north as Narvik. But it was also evident that they were suffering losses too, a number of their newest warships falling victim either to Norwegian shore batteries or the R.A.F. and Royal Navy. Quickly recovering from the first shock of invasion, Norway, at a meeting of the Storing at Hamar, decided to resist and fight for her

independence. At the same time Sweden announced precautionary measures in reply to a German *demarche* asking Sweden to observe strict neutrality; the Government said that it intended to maintain its neutrality and reserved the liberty to take measures necessary for the maintenance and defence of its neutrality.

In view of the later course of the campaign, Mr. Churchill was in rather over-optimistic mood on April 12th when he declared : " All German ships in the Skagerrak and Kattegat will be sunk. We are not going to allow the enemy to supply their armies across these waters with impunity."

He denied that British forces had occupied Norwegian ports but said that they had landed in the Faros Islands which would be returned to Denmark after the war.

Cheering news for the Allies came on the 14th when it was announced that a strong naval force made up of a battleship, destroyers, minesweepers and aeroplanes had the previous day made a daring raid on Narvik, silenced the shore batteries and sunk seven enemy destroyers with negligible loss to itself. It was also stated that new minefields had been laid in the Great and Little Belts off Denmark and skirting the German Baltic coast as far as Memel. Then came the first big news of the Norwegian struggle—that British forces had landed at several points. The landings were hailed with relief in Britain, France and, of course, Norway and Sweden, and numberless conjectures were made on the possible repercussions on the fighting in Norway, but the Germans were fast consolidating their gains and as events were to show the British expeditionary force faced an insuperable task.

In the midst of the excitement a certain item of news, it is interesting to recall, which was of the greatest significance,

was given little prominence. It came from another part of Europe—from Italy—and was a broadcast to the armed forces, given by Signor Ansaldo, director of Count Ciano's newspaper, the *Telegrafo,* and held a wealth of meaning. "The war which has fallen upon Norway might fall upon us, but if the bugles sound, we shall be the ones to sound them," he said. "Italy is preparing for the moment which will be most opportune. Such an occasion, which a month ago might have been very remote, may now be nearer than you think. All who believe that Italy can draw into her shell and seek nothing but to make a little money are in error. Such a programme could not be carried out by a little country like Norway. How could it succeed in our case who have common frontiers with the belligerents and Mediterranean interests?"—Italy was preparing for her attack on France.

On the 17th it was officially stated that the British troops who disembarked in North Norway had made contact with the Norwegians. It soon became evident that Narvik was the principal scene of hostilities while further south heavy R.A.F. raids were continuing on strong points established by the Germans. On the 20th it was reported that Trondheim was likely to enter the news as a battle zone, but all the time the reports, which mostly emanated from Stockholm, tended to be overoptimistic and in view of great shortage of official statements, it was extremely difficult to gauge the true situation. The presence of French troops, stated to have landed along with British reinforcements at Molde, south of Trondheim, was also reported from Stockholm.

Except for a Norwegian war *communiqué* on the 21st announcing very vaguely the arrival of British troops in

eastern Norway, the true positions of the various armies remained extremely vague. The R.A.F. were keeping up an endless pounding of enemy positions and it was announced on the 27th that fighter aircraft were operating in Norway where a temporary base had been established.

Towards the end of the month fears were beginning to be felt regarding the magnitude of the Allies' task but these were allayed to some extent by the official announcement on the 28th that more British troops had landed. But despite unconfirmed reports that more Allied reinforcements were "pouring" into Norway, the early days of May saw the recurrence of fears that all was not well. On the 2nd Mr. Chamberlain made a statement in the Commons in which, after dealing with the Royal Navy's achievements off the coast of Norway, he said that the German expectation of a walkover had been "frustrated" and Germany's supplies of iron ore from Narvik were "indefinitely suspended." He announced that after a heroic attempt by the British forces to capture Trondheim, the idea of taking the town from the south had been abandoned. British troops had been withdrawn with no loss whatever. A factor responsible for the decision to withdraw was the Germans' local superiority in the air. "Although we have not captured the town," the Premier said, "I am confident that the balance of advantage lies up to the present with the Allied forces." He asked Members "to exercise patience a little longer before I can give the full story, for it is impossible to make public as yet plans and movements which are not yet complete."

But the British Press comment that followed the Premier's speech showed very definite signs of impatience, the demand for more vigorous efforts to bring the campaign to a successful

conclusion being a feature. However, while there was considerable criticism of the conduct of the war, most newspapers preferred to wait for a fuller statement by the Government, to be given the following week. *Reuter's* lobby correspondent stated that there was a large body of opinion that "when the critical moment for Norway arrived, the expeditionary force, and especially its transports, so recently made ready for Finland had already been dispersed."

A change in leadership was soon being advocated, the *News Chronicle* saying that the British reverse in southern Norway called for "a fundamental reassessment both of our leadership and the scale and tempo of our material effort."

In Paris the general reaction to Chamberlain's statement was that "only the head of the Government of a very great nation could express himself with such simple courage," while in the United States, it was held that the German campaign in Norway was in the "nature of a decoy and the refusal of the British to fall into the enemy's trap was wise."

Mr. C. R. Attlee was the first public man to give voice to the general feelings about Norway, when on the 3rd, speaking at a London dinner, he declared—"I believe the people will insist on courageous, resolute and efficient leadership to carry us through this crisis. I am quite certain that our people will respond and we, in the Labour movement, will do our part."

Mr. Lloyd George also had a word or two to say about the situation when, two days later, writing in a London paper, he remarked—"We are suffering not from one blunder. The Norwegian fiasco is one of a series of incredible botcheries." Declaring that Britain should have anticipated a swift German counter-strike to the decision to invade Norwegian territorial waters, he said—"When it came we

were utterly unprepared to parry it. We sent to Norway a hurriedly patched-up expeditionary force devoid of essential equipment. The consequences were inevitable."

Mr. Lloyd George added that the official *communiqués* gave the impression that the German advance in Norway had been stopped and that stern measures were being taken without loss of time and would end in wresting the whole of Norway from the aggressor's grip. He asked—"Who will give any credence henceforth to our official news? It is a deplorable tale of incompetence and stupidity. It means that the direction of the war by the Allies is hopelessly inferior to that of their formidable opponents." He declared that the nation was equal to any sacrifice but that they were all helpless to win victories when the supreme direction was not only "faulty but feeble and foolish."

That the end of Norway was drawing near was by that time only too obvious. Reports spoke of the re-grouping of British, French and Norwegian forces, and large withdrawals in various sectors.

The big Commons debate started on the 7th and severe criticism of the Government's conduct of the campaign was made by Mr. Attlee, when he declared that he was not satisfied that the Cabinet was an efficient instrument for conducting the war. The country wanted to be sure that it was getting the right leadership.

"The gravamen of my charge," he said, "is that it does not seem that the Government made out their war plans beforehand with intelligent anticipation. There was not adequate military intelligence, and there was not the necessary concentration of essential objectives. I am asking whether there was not delay and discussion when action was necessary."

Mr. Chamberlain, who spoke for less than an hour, announced that Mr. Churchill would from then on have the special responsibility of supervising military operations from day to day, and had been authorized to give guidance and direction to the Chief of Staffs Committee. He expressed himself against the opinion that a smaller Cabinet would save time or lead to quicker decisions, and emphasized that there were no divisions in the Cabinet. That the British plans in Norway had not succeeded were due to two facts—inability to secure aerodromes from which British fighters could operate, and the rapid advance of German reinforcements.

But Chamberlain's excuses were not sufficient; there was a rapidly gathering storm rising against him and as a challenge to the Government, the Labour Opposition decided to demand a division, at the end of the debate, on the Government motion for adjournment. This was announced in the Commons on the 8th by Mr. Herbert Morrison, after he had made a personal attack on the Prime Minister, Sir John Simon and Sir Samuel Hoare, declaring that they were unequal to the tasks which confronted them.

This drew forth a vigorous protest from Chamberlain who, intervening in the debate, accepted Morrison's challenge and called upon his supporters to rally round the Government during the division.

Mr. Lloyd George was in excellent debating form. In a vigorous speech, he attacked the Government for having sent to Norway an "ill-equipped, half-baked expeditionary force." Referring to an appeal made by the Premier to the nation for greater sacrifices, Mr. Lloyd George said: "There is nothing which would contribute more to victory in this

war than that he (the Premier) should sacrifice the seals of office."

The following day the vote was taken and it showed 281 for the Government and 200 against. Forty-one Government supporters voted for the Opposition, 170 abstained from voting, while 30 were absent.

But that Chamberlain was finished was now almost certain and there was little surprise at the news given out on the 10th that Winston Churchill had become Prime Minister. That day also brought news that Hitler had struck again—at Holland and Belgium, and what fighting there remained to be done in Norway sank into the background in face of the great catastrophe, which was about to overwhelm France.

CHAPTER VI

FRANCE IN DECAY

THE story of France between 1919 and 1939 was a story of gradual decay, thanks in no small measure to corruption brought about by the 200 financial families—the notorious *Deux Cents*—and the insidious seeping-in of Fascist. But the decay was not steady. There was a period, from 1936 to 1938, during which on more than one occasion France might have been saved, although it was the most tragic chapter in her modern history. It was then that the people attempted to clean up their country through the agency of the *Front Populaire,* but they were ultimately defeated by a handful of Capitalists, backed up by several Fascist organizations. Those who caused France's downfall were prepared to see her crushed before the might of the Germans rather than give the ordinary man-in-the-street a chance to make a real

contribution towards future world peace by settling his country's affairs and joining hands with other anti-Fascist forces in Europe that were out to stop Hitler.

Let us first examine briefly that which has been France's real ruin—the 200 Families. From the days of Napoleon I the country had been run by the Banque de France and this organization was run by 200 financial families, and what is important to realize at the outset is that, although the Banque issued the public money of France and held its gold supply, it was purely a private organization—not a State bank. Only the 200 shareholders possessing the largest stock were allowed to vote for the regents, who were the controllers of the Banque. For example in 1933, it had approximately 40,000 shareholders. Of these 17,889 held one share each, 9,021 two, and 8,021 held four—that is 68,015 were held by 34,931 small shareholders. Only 6,069 persons had the remaining 115,485, and of these the leading 200 had the voting power, and it was they who were responsible for the choice of the regents. There were 18 and three of them—the governor and two vice-governors—got their appointments from the State but they had no more voting power than the other regents and if they did not toe the line they had really no option but to resign. It was also laid down that the governor should possess 100 shares of Banque stock while each vice-governor had to have 50. The price of shares was about 10,000 francs and as it was generally found that the governor or vice-governors were not in a position to lay down 1,000,000 francs or 500,000 the other regents were always very accommodating and advanced the necessary amount.

Three other regents were representatives of the Treasury and they were carefully chosen for the job while the remaining twelve were the people who really mattered; they were

representatives of private interests. In many cases they occupied seats that had been handed down from father to son. Needless to say the families that thus ruled the Banque were tied up in high international finance which is generally much above the heads of ordinary folk and can often be shady in the extreme. Thus we had the flower of French finance all collected together to serve themselves and the class to which they belonged. They were an exclusive lot for it was by no means wealth alone that got you into that inner circle—you had to be born to it. And this exclusive financial aristocracy did not rule France alone so far as finances were concerned—they also ruled the politics of France and that was the most devilish part of the whole business. The world has often been amazed at the rapidity with which French cabinets fell but invariably it was because the regents of the Banque, by withholding credits from the Treasury, would bring down a prime minister who did not do just what they told him. Some tried to fight the regents but they were beaten in the end.

As I shall endeavour to show, this aristocracy were really prepared to sell themselves to Fascism as a protective measure against the development of progressive tendencies which if they had been allowed to grow would ultimately have endangered their positions.

Pre-Second World War France, though advertised as one of the great democracies, was in fact an early home of Fascism. The main organizations were four in number (there were quite a number of others)—the Action Française, the Croix de Feu (Fiery Cross) the Jeunesse Patriote (Patriot Youth) and the Francistes (meaning roughly patriotic Frenchmen).

The first-named centred round the newspaper of that

name and was the oldest organization ; in fact, it flourished long before Hitler cast a cloud across Europe. The paper was mainly monarchist in outlook and reactionary in the extreme. It was a staunch upholder of the Catholic Church and believed that France had lost everything with the Revolution and must return to pre-Revolutionary ways of thought. But it was not till about 1929 that the Action Française really grew into prominence. From then onwards the movement went ahead by leaps and bounds. So also did the paper. It was a scurrilous rag and completely disregarded the law of libel, which as a matter of fact, so far as newspapers were concerned, was practically non-existent in France. And in this connection the state of the French Press for years before this war is extremely difficult for us to understand. In the first place the great majority of French newspapers had their columns for sale. Not only were they subsidized by the French Government but large sums of money were being sent by foreign governments, especially Japan and Italy. German money of course also found a way through and so frequently the attitude to foreign affairs by some of the leading papers showed distinct Fascist tendencies. For instance during Japan's war in Manchuria a large number of French newspapers were out and out pro-Jap. The story is told that when a new American Ambassador—Mr. Walter Edge—took up his duties the editor of an important Paris paper called on the Ambassador's secretary to discuss "publicity".

The newspaper "Action Française" got away with a lot more than it should have in unprogressive views, and it is interesting to note that the organization had among its sympathizers several prominent army leaders, one being none other than Marshal Pétain.

The Croix de Feu was a younger body and had mainly as its followers many ex-Servicemen, under the leadership of the notorious Colonel Comte Casimir de la Rocque. It was to a large extent carried on as a military organization, having large armouries at various places and even aeroplanes. It made no bones about wanting dictatorship and was quite prepared for bloody civil strife.

The Jeunesse Patriote had as its ideal fight against the "revolutionary danger" and was largely composed of young toughs and hooligans who went about armed with revolvers and bludgeons and were versed in the arts of fighting in the streets to where they belonged.

The Francistes were out-and-out anti-Semitic and the organization was a cheap imitation of the Fascist Party of Italy.

Despite the noticeable trend towards Fascism in France by 1933, the general effect of Hitler's sudden rise was of profound alarm. The Fuehrer's threats of vengeance against Germany's old enemy during his early struggle had not been forgotten and so a fresh effort was made by the French Government to pin down the Reich's growing power. The then Foreign Secretary, M. Barthou, hurriedly went to Russia and various negotiations resulted in the Franco-Soviet and the Czecho-Soviet pacts of mutual assistance. Then came Soviet inclusion in the League of Nations and it looked as if prospects of a happier future in Europe were possible but soon Fascist interests in France made a great effort to separate their country from Russia. The assassination of Barthou in Marseilles, where he was killed along with King Alexander of Yugoslavia, helped them considerably for before that tragic event the French Foreign Secretary had visited the Balkans in an attempt to reach understandings with Rumania and Yugoslavia. About that time the renegade Laval took a hand,

delaying month after month the ratification of the Soviet Pact. Laval was also taking an unhealthy interest over the coming Abyssinian War and had started his secret negotiations with Mussolini. After the disclosure of the Hoare-Laval plan (referred to in the Introduction) the latter went temporarily into the background, having to resign the Premiership in January, 1936. Two months later Hitler, showing his contempt for the Treaty of Versailles, marched into the de-militarised area of the Rhineland. Such a step called for effective action but nothing was done. France turned to London for advice and in the pause lost valuable time. Britain was not prepared to back up any idea of French mobilization and the result was that Hitler got off free. Then followed the scandal of "non-intervention" in the Spanish Civil War when rather than run the chance of having a progressive state on the other side of the Pyrenees, France preferred to allow the Republicans to be gradually overwhelmed by the forces of Fascism. But before we deal more fully with the French and the Spanish struggle we must first turn to the formation of the Popular Front with which the country had a real chance of salvation, but thanks to reactionary interests, once more she made rapid strides towards catastrophe.

In the early thirties it became evident that there was a growing struggle between the masses and the real rulers of France, the great financiers. And with the success of Fascism elsewhere in Europe, the French adherents were becoming bolder and doing everything in their power to promote internal strife. In this they were greatly helped by a series of scandals—the biggest of which was the Stavisky case—for attempts were made to show how corrupt the French Government could be, as these scandals were continually linked up with political life. The case of Stavisky was a golden opportunity. He was simply a cheap swindler but led by the

"Action Française," the French Press raised a resounding howl and tried to bring discredit on the whole parliamentary political system. Fascism was of course behind this campaign for it was hoped thereby that the country would become a willing partner of Germany. Early 1934 saw the agitation growing to fever pitch and rioting broke out in which cries were raised in the streets against the cabinet. The Chautemps Government had to resign and on January 27th Daladier took over the Premiership. It was an alarming period in which the fate of France seemed to be hanging in the balance. Paris was in a fever of excitement and Daladier knew that one of the chief agitators was the Prefect of Police himself, Chiappe, the Corsican, who came out into the open as a Fascist in 1940, when he was installed as Chief of Police by the Germans and behaved in the most brutal fashion towards the working classes. Daladier dismissed him but was afraid to offend the financial rulers of the country and followed up this step with the extraordinary one of offering Chiappe the post of Resident-General of French Morocco. But he refused and there was a fresh outbreak of excitement. On February 6th the Croix de Feu came out in strength and attacked the Parliament houses. There were bloody scenes in which other Fascist organizations joined in and without attempting any decisive action Daladier resigned. Then followed the Doumergue Government. The reactionary interests thought that they were now getting everything their own way but the workers and peasants had been roused and on February 12th a general strike was ordered, to protest against the events of the 6th. Both Socialists and Communists had joined hands and they were assisted by many thousands of State employees and the strike which was an outstanding success did much to restore confidence in the ordinary working man. Mass demonstrations were held at which a solid, united front was formed—

a dream which had long been cherished by the Communist Party had at last come true.

After this the Popular Front made definite headway. In October 1934 Maurice Thorez, General Secretary of the Communist Party, just before the Congress of the Radical-Socialist Party of France, meeting at Nantes, proposed a People's Front for Liberty, Work and Peace, and although certain sections were unwilling to join in at first, by January 1935 it became evident that the movement was definitely gaining strength. In May there was a meeting between Socialist and Communist deputies and a letter, signed by Leon Blum (Socialist) and Ramette (Communist), was sent to members of the Radical (corresponding roughly to Liberals) and moderate Left-wing groups.

Gradually Daladier was won over and with the Radicals he came in. On the great annual celebration of July 14th (in 1935), he marched along with Blum and Thorez to the Bastille where the following oath was taken:—

> "We solemnly pledge ourselves to remain united for the defence of Democracy, for the disarmament and dissolution of the Fascist Leagues, to put our liberties out of reach of Fascism. We swear, on this day which brings life again to the first victory of the Republic, to defend the Democratic liberties conquered by the people of France, to give bread to the workers, work to the young, and peace to humanity as a whole."

After this the People's Front gained rapidly in strength and there was growing opposition to Laval's government, especially when his plan with Hoare became public property.

In January 1936 the Popular Front published their programme which showed that they were not only willing to take definite action against the Fascist Leagues but also the "200 Families" as well. They were also prepared to

take steps against the armament manufacturers, who, as the world over, they were in France not only "merchants of death" but international intriguers. So far as the masses were concerned, new economic decrees were to replace those of Laval's, a better and steadier market was to be got for the peasants, full trade union rights were to be given and a shorter working week in the factories.

When these points were made known it was immediately realized that here at last was a chance for France to clean up the mess she had got into and also a chance to reach out towards other progressive elements in Europe and stop Hitler's onward march.

On January 18th the Executive Committee of the Radical Party stated that Laval's policy was "contrary to the doctrines of the Party" and a few days later the Radical Ministers resigned. That was the end of the Laval Government and as a stop-gap before the elections that were to take place about three months later, M. Sarraut, a Radical, formed a government, which saw that the Franco-Soviet Pact was at last ratified and passed a law against the Fascist Leagues. But Hitler was on the alert. It was obvious that the Popular Front was heading for victory but before the elections could take place, he marched into the Rhineland and denounced the treaties of Locarno. The French Government, as I have already explained, hesitated and Germany scored a great victory.

The Popular Front won easily in the elections and Blum became Premier while Daladier, who along with Socialists and Communists had been denouncing the "200 Families" at public meetings, was appointed Minister of Defence. The Communists who were invited to join the government decided not to do so, but agreed to give their support and co-operation.

But as the government was being formed a series of great strikes started throughout France, the main contention being that the workers' economic demands must be immediately settled, and these centred mainly round the wage cuts that had been made since 1930. All manner of industries and trades were involved and soon over 1,000,000 workers were "out".

This may appear surprising in view of the Popular Front's success, but the move was simply to ensure that Blum settled down at once to carrying out the programme. It must be remembered that though they appeared to be overcome for the moment the financial interests were still there, plotting behind the scenes and were a great power in the land, so the workers felt that they must make their presence felt to be sure that the Premier would not give way on any point to the hated "200". It also should be stressed that the strikes were unique in the history of labour, in that every industry and trade involved chose to "stay-in," a method unknown before in France. The workers simply stopped work but remained beside their benches and the machinery. Everything was the last thing in orderliness; not the slightest damage was done, machines were kept clean and in good order, food committees had been arranged and the workers were supplied with meals. Food was of course not overplentiful but even in the great departmental stores, which were also affected, there was not the slightest sign of pilfering though supplies lay in tempting array.

There was immediately a howl from the Rightist Press, that the strikes must be put down, but the government steadfastly refused to use force. The employers were helpless and could do nothing but surrender and so on June 7th the General Federation of Employers came to an agreement with the workers' representatives. Under the chairmanship of

Blum, they had been meeting at the Hotel Matignon and so it was called the "Matignon Agreement". Almost immediately the necessary legislation was passed and the following points were decided upon:—

1. Forty-hour week without loss of pay.
2. Fourteen days' paid holiday per year.
3. Collective agreements in every workshop, to be supervised by shop stewards directly elected by the men.
4. Steps towards the restoration of wage cuts, etc.

Even following this agreement there were a number of strikes but after an appeal by the Communist leaders that there was a danger of the workers eventually playing into the hands of the employers, the agitation subsided.

The Popular Front was enormously strengthened and the government felt in a position to tackle other tasks. The first was the passing of an Act to nationalise the armament firms, then to curb the activities of the Fascist Leagues and last but not least, steps to control the Bank of France. Steady progress was maintained in the programme during the rest of 1936 but if it was thought that the great financial interests had been crushed, a greater mistake could not have been made. All the time they were plotting behind the scenes and the first sign that all was not well came in March 1937 when Blum announced that there would be a pause in the programme; that was the beginning of the end, the "200" were to be again victorious.

As we have seen, after the success of the Popular Front at the elections, a number of concessions were given to the workers, and for some time the financial interests did not attempt to come into the open. For instance, they were not in a position to offer any opposition in Parliament, so instead, gradually at first, they brought financial pressure to bear on the government and the result was to bring about the de-

valuation of the franc, a move which in its train forced Blum to pause in his programme. There was a rapid export of capital until many millions had "taken flight" and government made frantic efforts to "defend" the franc. The situation became chaotic. At the same time, attempts were made to sabotage industry, to add to the government's difficulties.

It was a testing time for France and Europe as a whole. The Spanish War was in full swing and not only was Fascism testing itself out on Spanish soil, but also on the soil of France and the tragedy of it was that Blum was not a big enough man to meet the occasion. If he had stood firm, he might have won through, and the whole history of Europe might easily have been changed. But he paused and that was fatal. The financial interests had won the first round but before we go further in dealing with France's gradual internal collapse, let us consider the official attitude to the struggle on the other side of the Pyrenees and the international scene generally.

For a number of years until 1936 the political history of France and Spain had run on somewhat similar lines. When the Popular Front was coming into power a People's Front had won in Spain and then Franco rose and but for the wonderful recovery of the people, might have seized the country. I have shown in the Introduction how the Spanish struggle soon entered into a fight between two ideologies and it surely should have been in the interests of France—faced with Hitler and Mussolini—to have had her flank safe from their form of government. But though the leaders of the Popular Front Government were sincere in their desire to improve the lot of their countrymen, their foreign policy was shamefully weak. They looked for a lead from Britain and found none till the "non-intervention" farce started. This

they took part in and finally when it was evident that the Republicans were desperately in need of arms—by which time Blum was succumbing to the tactics of his opponents—France closed her frontier. Thereafter with the gradual weakening of the French Government, "appeasement" became the order of the day till Munich saw the final triumph of reaction.

When Blum paused to "consolidate" the position, as he explained, much remained to be done in the Government's programme and the opportunity was seized by the financiers to see that nothing would be done. The flight of capital abroad continued and by the middle of 1937 everything was being done to sow panic; and when in June attempts were made to balance the budget, and the Senate defeated the Government, rejecting the budget proposals by a substantial majority, Blum, instead of trying to fight on, promptly resigned. Chautemps, the Radical, took his place and the Popular Front, in which the people still had unshaken faith, gave him full support. But the financial interests were now going at it hammer and tongs and the extent to which Fascism was growing was revealed by the sensational exposition of the Cagoulards' conspiracy in November 1937. Known as the "Hooded Men," the Cagoulards who had great influence in the Army and, of course, among capitalist interests, had as their main object the breaking down of the Republican *régime* and to do so they had established an amazingly intricate system of arms dumps (supplied by Germany and Italy) and an underground army which could have gone far in promoting a successful civil war. And though this gigantic plot was exposed, so strong were the financial interests becoming, no effective action was taken against the principal conspirators.

By the beginning of 1938, so powerful were the attacks by the financiers that Chautemps was forced to give in to

them, the Socialists withdrew their support and the government collapsed. After a short spell of crisis, Chautemps was in again, this time heading a Radical Government, which declared they would carry on the ideals of the Popular Front, but it did not last long and while France was again without proper leadership, Hitler marched into Austria. Blum once more came to the fore with Radicals and Socialists behind him but this government proved no better than its predecessor and there was the inevitable collapse. With "appeasement" in full swing, Daladier took over with several former opponents of the Popular Front behind him, though he declared that he would try and adhere to its programme. But this proved a farce and playing more and more into the hands of reactionaries, armed with special powers, he remained in charge till the spring of 1940.

In September 1939 the position of France was, to put it as simply as possible—

(1) The Government in the hands of the reactionary elements;

(2) The Government, armed with far-reaching emergency decrees, in a position to work their complete will on the people;

(3) The reactionary interests, through the instrument of the Government, in the saddle and in a position to fight those—the working classes—whom they considered even worse enemies than the external foes of France;

(4) Widespread inefficiency, especially in the Army, whose generals showed a remarkable disinterestedness in the strides made in mechanical warfare (take for instance General de Gaulle's attempts to persuade his superiors as to the grave menace presented by the modern equipment of the Germans) and on top of that out-and-out Fascists

holding key positions (even leading members of the Cagoulards).

In such a position therefore, with the real rulers of the country doing everything possible (one may recall in this connection the amazing treatment meted out to the Communists on the excuse of the Soviet's pact with Germany) to suppress the masses, how was it possible for France to put up a real struggle ?

Corruption was rampant and nothing was done to stop it. The Press, whatever use it might have been, was gagged by extraordinary censor regulations and although an anti-Hitler façade was kept up (for example, Daladier's reply to Hitler's peace-feelers referred to earlier), such rottenness existed that there was no hope of French survival from the day the Germans started their invasion.

In March 1940 the Daladier Government fell but it was succeeded by one no better. Paul Reynaud, the new Premier, was hailed as a foe of the Nazis, but he sought support from the Right, and when France was invaded he appointed the senile Pétain Minister of State and Vice-Premier and 76-year-old Weygand Generalissimo in place of Gamelin. These he called "new and fresh forces." Reynaud was but a tool and prepared the way for the final collapse of France.

CHAPTER VII

THE FALL OF FRANCE

BEFORE we consider details of the German attack on Holland and Belgium and then France, let me give some idea of the

defences of the three countries concerned at the time of the invasion.

Here are a few facts written early in May, 1940, about the first two countries. They now make interesting reading in view of Germany's terrific thrust but a few days later.

It was first of all pointed out that Holland and Belgium built their hopes on the speed and efficiency with which the Allies could send them assistance, especially in the air, but as no plans had been worked out before the invasion between the Allies and Holland and Belgium, there was bound to be considerable confusion to start with.

The contemporary account continued :—

From the German frontier in the Cleves region to either Rotterdam or Amsterdam is a bare 75 miles : a country so small as Holland appears to offer opportunities for an aerial *Blitzkrieg,* and Holland's air force has thus had to be reinforced by French and English planes to allow the proper development of the ground defences. The Dutch-German frontier is 200 miles distant from the East Anglian coast, and against advancing Germans the R.A.F. can operate from aerodromes in England as well as in the Low Countries and France.

Until September last Holland was far behind her neighbours in expenditure on defence, but ever since Munich she has been trying to make headway, and has been particularly active since November and the first "scare" over invasion. Her common frontier with Germany extends for some 230 miles and unfortunately offers fewer natural advantages to the defence than do Belgium's eastern districts. The Germans were known to have large motorized forces at various points along the Dutch frontier, especially near Gronau, and military aerodromes have in recent months been constructed in plenty. Motorized troops in this area are said

to have been trained to travel fast across country, ignoring the roads, if necessary, and to smash isolated fortified positions.

Against this, the Dutch as a first line of defence can oppose pill-boxes and anti-tank obstacles, but over so long a front their troops might easily present the appearance of a string of detachments unable to do more than delay the attack. The flat north-eastern districts with their sand and gravel substructure, heaths, patches of wood and meadows, afford no natural line of defence until the river Yssel is reached, but this and the Maas (the Meuse) would give the Dutch a chance of standing on a prepared line. Inundations extending from the Zuider Zee to Maestricht would help the defence if allowed by the position in the air to create them: and the marshes between the Maas and the Juliana Canal could be turned to account. This canal is a northward prolongation of Belgium's Albert Canal and in an easterly incline rejoins the river Maas 40 miles east of Rotterdam.

To the rear of the inundations already mentioned is the so-called "Holland Fortress," the provinces of North and South Holland with parts of Zealand and Utrecht, two-thirds of it surrounded by the sea, the rest defended by permanent fortifications whose strength is increased by zones capable of being flooded. Coastal artillery at De Helder protects the entrance to the Zuider Zee, other fortifications bar access to the harbours of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and the estuary of the Scheldt.

When tension was great in November, there were signs of improvisation about defence measures on the eastern frontier, but much hard work has been put in since. The Dutch Government has recently rounded up many Nazi sympathizers, thus making plain its intention of allowing no "Fifth Column" to operate as it did in Norway. As a further

precaution during the "scare" in November it extinguished lighthouses and withdrew lightships so as to plunge the coast of North Holland in darkness at night, and it stopped traffic on Dutch rivers and canals. To defend her coastal waters Holland has a fleet of light craft armed with machine-guns and torpedo tubes. Her Navy counts four cruisers of tonnage 6,670 to 3,350, three coastal defence ships of from 5,644—4,371 tons, a number of mine-sweepers and minelayers, eight destroyers, eight first-class torpedo boats, and 31 submarines. Of these some ships are normally in the East Indies. The Dutch Army, it is stated, could be expanded to 700,000 men, and there is an air force of 600 machines.

Holland's inhabitants number eight million and the country's most thickly populated parts are in the west, where the leading towns, commercial and industrial, are situated Much of this area lying west of a line drawn through Groningen, Utrecht and Antwerp lies below sea level and is protected from submersion by dunes, dykes and other coastal barriers. The general slope of the country is from the south-east to the north-west, and this is the general direction of rivers ; these and the canals should assist the defence if bridges can be blown up in time. The principal rivers are the Rhine, the Maas and the Scheldt, all of which pour their waters into the North Sea past the Zealand Islands. The Rhine has important branches, the southernmost of which is the Waal ; from the German frontier, near where the bifurcation takes place, a more northerly branch called the Oude Rhin traverses the flat Dutch plain to Rotterdam, being known as the Lek in its later stages. The Yssel and the Vecht flow to the Zuider Zee ; south of the Waal is the Maas, which receives as tributaries the Roer, the Mark and the Aa. All these rivers are important waterways.

The canal system is highly developed and gives many

inland towns an almost maritime appearance. The total length of rivers and navigable canals is about 4,817 miles and of roads 16,000 miles. With Germany and Belgium the country is linked by a network of railways. Holland's greatest length from north to south is 164 miles ; its breadth from Walcheren Island to the German frontier near Cleves is 120 miles. The coast at the north and south extremities presents a broken appearance with inlets of the sea and a number of islands. The southern half of the province of Limburg is hilly, and there are hills in Overysel and Utrecht, a range in Drente and another in Gelderland. But as a whole Holland is a flat country of pastoral and agricultural acres, on which since 1870 farming and stock breeding have developed to supply markets in the great industrial countries. Among the world's ship-owning nations Holland stands eighth, and she has world famous ports in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. In 1936-37 Great Britain was the leading buyer of her exports—chiefly foodstuffs—and was one of the chief sources of her imports. It may be added that from Rotterdam to the nearest point on the English coast is 120 miles.

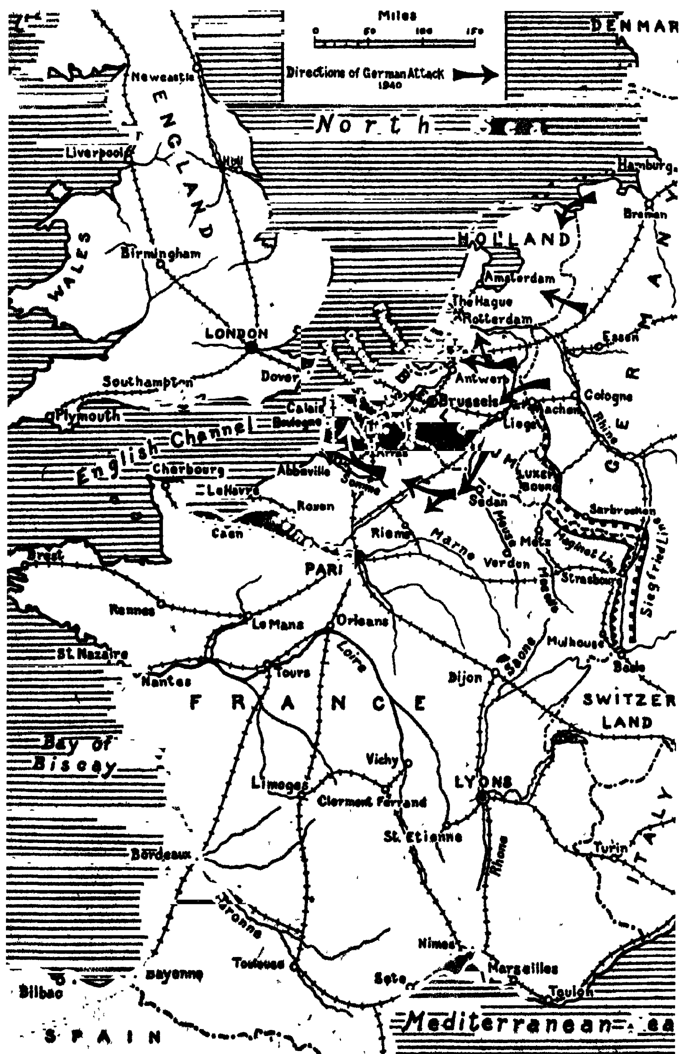
In August 1914 the Germans were on the brink of invading Holland as well as Belgium. Such an attack was indeed contemplated in the Schlieffen Plan but was not carried out partly out of respect for the Dutch defences. In 1918 Holland was again in danger when she rationed the amount of sand and gravel transported by the Germans over Dutch waterways for use in construction in Belgium. Ludendorff wanted to overrun her but the civil auhorities at Berlin would not let him. The Germans' object in invading Belgium in 1914 was to outflank the French armies defending the Franco-German frontier : and it is known that certain German Generals in the present war have pressed for a wheeling

movement through the Low Countries in view of the strength of the Maginot Line.

Belgium's population is about 8 millions, and an estimate of the size of her army on complete mobilization is 700,000. With her grim experience of 1914-1918 to spur her on she has worked longer than Holland on her defences, which since 1935 have been revised. Officers and technical troops are said to be well trained, the Belgians' supply of machine-guns and light artillery is good, and French expert opinion is favourably impressed with their new 4·7 mm. anti-tank gun. The air force, according to the latest published figures, counts 600 machines.

In 1914 German strategy was based on the seizure of the key fortress of Liége and then a great wheeling movement on the right wing pivoting on Thionville-Metz. Since 1919 the Belgians have remodelled the Liége fortifications, adding an exterior zone of strong defences which doubles the former distance between the centre of the city and the outpost line to the east. They have also fortified the gap of Lixhe which the Germans traversed in 1914, and to the south and east have covered Liége with a series of strong works. An arc of new forts, each surrounded by a deep anti-tank moat, stretches from the Meuse opposite the Dutch frontier round to Remouchamps, and the road to Liége through the gorge of the river Amblève has been barred. An inner line of pill-boxes protects the roads into the city.

The German-Belgian frontier is only 40 miles in length, while south of it the Belgian-Luxembourg frontier as far as Longwy measures 45 miles. The whole length of these frontiers is guarded by concrete redoubts and pill-boxes manned by picked troops armed with automatic weapons and trained to demolish and fortify quickly. Most of this south-eastern part of Belgium as well as the northern part of the



Miles
0
50
100
150
Directions of German Attack 1940
North
ENGLAND
WALES
Newcastle
Liverpool
Hull
Birmingham
LONDON
Southampton
Dover
Plymouth
English Channel
Calais
Boulogne
Cherbourg
Abbeville
Le Havre
Rouen
Caen
Somme
Brest
Rennes
St. Nazaire
Nantes
Le Mans
Tours
Orleans
PARIS
Rheims
Marne
Verdun
Metz
Meuse
Sedan
FRANCE
Loire
Dijon
Saone
Vichy
Limoges
Clermont Ferrand
LYONS
St. Etienne
Rhone
Bordeaux
Bay of Biscay
Garonne
Toulouse
Bayonne
Bilbao
SPAIN
Nimes
Sete
Marseilles
Toulon
Mediterranean
HOLLAND
Amsterdam
The Hague
Rotterdam
Antwerp
Brussels
Liege
Aachen
LUXEMBOURG
Hamburg
Bremen
Essen
Cologne
Rhine
Sarbrucken
Maginot Line
Siegfried Line
Strasbourg
Mulhouse
Basle
SWITZERLAND
Turin
ITALY

Duchy of Luxembourg is comprised within the wooded plateau of the Ardennes. The rest of Belgium is largely flat. Liège is thus on the second line of Belgium's defences, which is based on the valley of the river Meuse and the Albert Canal. For 70 miles this canal runs from Liège to Antwerp roughly parallel to the Dutch frontier and is also fortified. Gigantic ditches have been constructed to hold up tanks. Fortified zones protect Antwerp and Namur.

Such was the position in May, 1940, before the German onslaught.

Here also are some details of the Maginot Line, stretching from Luxemburg to Switzerland and started in 1929, but never continued to the North Sea where it was most needed. Much later the Germans started their Siegfried Line but worked at it with feverish haste and extended it to cover the Belgian and Dutch sections of the German frontier.

The Maginot Line was pre-eminently a combination of passive obstacle and active defence; its building marked the abandonment of the 1914 conception of the *offensive a outrance*—attack at all costs—which led to such tragic results in the Great War.

During the construction of the Maginot Line, 12,000,000 cubic metres of earth were dug out of the ground between 1929-1936; 1,500,000 cubic metres of concrete were cast; 50,000 tons of steel plates were set up in position; galleries were hollowed out which in a straight line would cover the distance from Paris to Liège; 15,000 workmen were engaged on the construction; seven billions of francs were spent.

An account written about it before the fatal days of May, 1940, said:—

"Great precautions have been taken to assure the maximum of resistance. The towers of the underground workings, which weigh some 120 tons, are monolithic, and

"As a result of the intense constructional activity in the last year the Westwall now comprises 12,000 steel and concrete forts extending in an uninterrupted line from Holand to Switzerland. Many of them are subterranean, and are reputedly equipped with batteries of heavy machine-guns, trench mortars, and flame-throwers. In the Moselle Valley many fortifications are built deeply into the hillsides. Below ground are spacious quarters, capable of accommodating large units, which are heated, lit by electricity, and gas-proof, and which contain kitchens, shower-baths, etc. There are in addition extensive munition depots, machine rooms, and workshops, linked together by subterranean passages. The advanced fortifications of the Siegfried Line are strongly defended with machine-guns and anti-tank guns. Access to the fortifications is guarded by an elaborate system of road barricades, tank traps, and barbed-wire entanglements. There are also strong anti-aircraft defences."

Eight quiet months in the lines, 12 days of hard fighting and 10 days of getting out of Dunkirk—that briefly summarizes the tragic story of the B.E.F., with its commander subordinate to a French General, operating on strategy laid down by the French High Command. In addition to that, after the quiet months, the B.E.F. had suddenly to abandon their prepared lines to go to the assistance of Belgium which had been so sure of being able to maintain her neutrality that she would not join in pre-invasion discussions with the Allies how best to safeguard her frontiers. Amazing revelations were made after Dunkirk, showing the inadequacy of the British equipment and how Lord Gort had clamoured for more before the invasion started, shortage of guns and ammunition and technical appliances being a constant anxiety. The R.A.F. also hopelessly below strength for the great tasks it was called upon to perform, did magnificently,

and along with the Navy and a host of small vessels made possible the epic evacuation from Dunkirk when 225,000 British and some 120,000 French soldiers were taken out.

The French Army, poorly equipped and badly led, had been prepared for the defence of the Maginot Line, the strength of which had lulled the French into a hopeless sense of false security. The Germans had taken good care to extend their line to the North Sea, but the gap in France's defences from Luxemburg northwards was to prove her undoing.

The first authentic account of the B.E.F.'s misfortunes was made known towards the end of 1941 with the publication of Lord Gort's dispatches, of which I shall give a few of the salient points from a summary which came out to India at the time and was distributed by the *Associated Press*.

Owing to a break-through upon a part of the Allied line remote from their own, the B.E.F. found themselves involved almost from the start in what amounted to a continuous rearguard action, in which the situation deteriorated day by day, and means had to be devised, almost from hour to hour, to deal with this emergency or that.

Yet nowhere throughout the whole of these most difficult and harassing operations can we detect any loss either of head or heart on the part of the British troops, or of the men who led them. Their lines of communication were cut, they were hungry and lacking essential equipment. Allied support failed them upon either flank ; yet they fought their way unbroken to the Straits of Dover, and delivered some 80 per cent of their strength from the enemy's grasp.

The dispatches begin inevitably with an interesting comparison between the conditions under which the British Expeditionary Force was conveyed to France in September 1939 and those prevailing in August 1914. Time had marched on, and the avoidance of concentrated air attack was now an

overwhelming consideration. Calais and Boulogne were held to be out of the question as main landing ports, so Cherbourg, Nantes, St. Nazaire and Brest were selected.

The move to France was begun upon September 10, and was completed, thanks to the elaborate and secret nature of the precautions taken, exactly on schedule time without the loss of a man.

After being collected in their assembly area between Le Mans and Laval, the British proceeded to their allotted sector, and on the agreed date, October 3, the 1st Corps were in position upon the Belgian frontier.

It should be noted that Lord Gort's was not an independent command; he was under the orders of General Georges, Commander of the French Front of the North-East.

The British sector followed the frontier from the village of Maulde to the village of Halluin, and thence the River Lys to Armentieres—familiar territory to many a British veteran. The sector covered Tourcoing, Courtrai and Lille. Lord Gort established his headquarters at Arras, or, rather in the village of Habarc, eight miles to the west. The new conditions of warfare had rendered the widest possible dispersion necessary, not merely of the troops in any given area, but of headquarters staffs as well.

The winter was spent in the construction of a line of strong defences in depth along the French-Belgian frontier. From every point of view it would have been preferable to have sited these defences along the German-Belgian frontier, thus prolonging the Maginot Line to its logical conclusion as a continuous rampart against German invasion. But the Belgian Government adhered to a policy of the strictest neutrality. It was understood that defensive works in the form of tank-obstacles were under construction in eastern Belgium, but nothing was known for certain. The Belgian

Government anxious not to compromise their position of neutrality, resolutely declined either to hold joint Staff conferences with the Allies, or to permit Allied officers to enter Belgium and reconnoitre possible positions.

By the end of January the B.E.F. in France stood at 222,000 men—two corps of three divisions each, with other troops. Bases had been established, and lines of communication extended from the Belgian frontier, in a south-westerly direction through Amiens, to 17 ports in western and southern France.

Various defence schemes had been considered and decided upon, so far as the aloof attitude of the Belgian Government permitted, with the French High Command. But plainly, Lord Gort, confident though he was in his men, was far from happy about the equipment situation, and on several occasions he called the attention of the War Office to shortage of guns, ammunition and various technical apparatus.

The storm broke upon May 10, with the simultaneous violation of Dutch and Belgian neutrality by the Germans, and the invasion in immense force of both these countries.

Belgium immediately called upon the Allies for assistance, and the B.E.F. together with the French First Army, on its right, crossed the frontier that day, proceeding at speed for 60 miles, amid the cheers of the Belgian civil population to a selected position along the little river Dyle, which runs north and south through Louvain, east of Brussels.

These positions had barely been reached when grave news began to come in. The Belgians had failed to demolish important bridges upon their own eastern frontier, and were falling back, pressed by the enemy. Next day, May 12, came a rumour that the French Ninth Army, upon the right of the French First Army, opposite the Ardennes at Sedan, was giving way before a thrust by German armoured divisions.

It was more than a rumour ; it was the tragic truth. The French Ninth Army disintegrated completely, and within a few days German tanks and armoured cars were pouring through a gap 20 miles wide, heading straight for the French coast, and threatening to sever the Allied forces (including the B.E.F.) in the north from the main body of the French Army to the south.

Meanwhile, measures were being taken to re-establish the situation in Belgium which had been rendered difficult by the retirement under pressure of the Belgian Army. A conference was held at Mons on the afternoon of May 12, when it was agreed that the French General Billotte should co-ordinate the dispositions of the B.E.F., the Belgian Army, and the French 1st and 7th Armies.

So, for a short time the Dyle line was held, and with some promise of success. But events elsewhere were moving too fast. On May 15, the Dutch laid down their arms, creating a new source of danger in the north. It was obvious too that the French 1st Army on the right could not hold on to their positions much longer. Owing to the dissipation of the French 9th Army their right flank was in the air.

It was therefore decided to abandon the Dyle position and fall back, in accordance with a prepared plan, to the River Escaut, 60 miles westward. This difficult withdrawal was completed by May 19 but the gap to the south remained, and was growing wider. Enemy troops had penetrated as far as Amiens, and were getting astride the British lines of communication, which reached diagonally across France to the south-west, instead of running straight back to the Channel. German armoured vehicles actually reached Boulogne as early as May 21.

Plainly the situation could only be restored by strong counter-attacks across the gap. The initiative and principal

effort must come from the south side, where French G.H.Q. and the main French forces were situated. But precious hours and days passed; it did not mature. True, after the supersession of General Gamelin by General Weygand a scheme known as the Weygand Plan was formulated. But it was never put into execution. The situation had deteriorated too swiftly.

Thus Lord Gort found himself, almost from the start, thrown largely upon his own resources.

The most pressing need was to organize a line of defence along what had now become the southern front of the Billotte Army Group. This was accomplished by manning the chain of canals which runs through Bethune and St. Omer to Gravelines and the sea; and the situation was for the moment relieved.

Secondly, various emergency forces were improvised. These were called as a rule by the names of the generals commanding them—Macforce, Petreforce (Mason-Macfarlane, Petre), etc. The operations of those forces were particularly creditable because many of the troops composing them had been brought out from England not to fight but to dig and to complete their training. Half-trained and only partially armed, they clung grimly to the Canal Du Nord, the Scarpe. Armsa, and other key points.

Lastly, on May 20, from his scanty reserves Lord Gort even contrived to organize a force ('Frankforce') sufficient to counter-attack across the corridor. It was a gallant gesture, and the troops concerned reached their objectives for the first day. But adequate support was not forthcoming, and the effort ended. Still, casualties had been inflicted on the enemy, and delay had been imposed on a greatly superior enemy force against which Frankforce had blocked a vital road centre.

On May 23 the B.E.F. found itself in the position of a

beleaguered garrison, contained within a rough triangle some 50 miles each way.

The base of the triangle was the sea-coast from Gravelines, near Calais, to Nieuport in Belgium. The apex was at Douai, where most of the French were situated. The southern side followed the Canal Line, and was manned chiefly by our improvised forces; the eastern side was held by the three corps of the original B.E.F., with the Belgians on their left.

The British lines of communication were completely cut and no more reserves were available. The B.E.F. were on half-rations. The Weygand Plan was flickering out, and it was obvious that the only alternatives were surrender, evacuation, or a fight to the death.

On May 27, Lord Gort received a definite order from the Secretary of State for War, making it clear that his sole task now was to evacuate to England "the maximum number of your force possible." On the same day the news came that the King of the Belgians, faced with the now imminent collapse of his army, had asked for an armistice, and that a new gap some 20 miles wide was thus about to appear in the eastern face of the triangle, through which enemy tanks could pour towards the beaches.

Nothing now remained but to withdraw to a bridgehead (already reconnoitred) round Dunkirk, and cover the embarkation of as many troops as possible. Into the Dunkirk Perimeter, as it was called, British and French troops accordingly fought their way back. Here the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force came to their help with a flotilla of every kind of craft to bear them home. Orders were issued that British and French troops were thenceforth to be embarked in equal proportions.

Lord Gort himself did not witness the completion of the Dunkirk evacuation. He had already received instructions

from the British Government, which left him no option, that as soon as the B.E.F., by evacuation, fell below a strength of three divisions, he was to hand over to a corps commander and return home.

On May 31, he handed over to Major-General Alexander, and sailed that night.

Four days later, in the small hours of June 3, his successor, accompanied by the senior naval officer, made a tour of the Dunkirk beaches. They were deserted and empty. "On being satisfied that no British troops were left on shore, they themselves left for England."

Nearly 225,000 British soldiers (including 13,000 wounded) and 112,000 French soldiers had preceded them to England not counting some thousands more of French troops evacuated from Dunkirk to other ports in France.

Let us now recall some of the outstanding events during the fall of France, apart from the actual fighting engaged in by the B.E.F.

Making the blatantly false charges that Holland and Belgium were about to be used by the Allies for "widening the theatre of the war" and the fact that the two countries "favoured completely Germany's opponents," Belgian and Dutch newspapers "even surpassing the British and French in their anti-German attitude," Hitler invaded the two countries and Luxembourg simultaneously.

The strength of the Luftwaffe was used to the full, especially in the dropping of paratroops and it was not long before Holland's defences were paralysed, not only by the enemy without but also with the assistance of Dutch Nazis.

It was soon evident that the Germans were to carry on a ruthless war against civilians and many lost their lives when bombs were dropped indiscriminately on towns in Northern France, Belgium and Holland (the outrage on Rotterdam

being about the worst in the German Air Force's record of murderous onslaughts on civilians.)

During the first few days reports from Holland were very confusing but with the arrival of the Dutch Queen in England it was seen that Holland's resistance was nearly at an end.

Mr. Winston Churchill was settling down to his gigantic task and on May 13th the House of Commons welcomed the formation of a National Government under him by 381 votes to nil, while three days later President Roosevelt tried to impress upon his country the gravity of the situation in his special defence message to Congress.

He asked for 1,282,000,000 dollars in cash and contract authorizations for military implements, " to meet any lightning offensive against American interests."

"These are," he declared, "ominous days, whose swift and awful development has forced every neutral to look to its defences." He asserted that "dangers confront the United States because of Europe's war and the speed with which modern armies may conquer time and space."

He also said that he would like to see the United States geared to an ability to produce at least 50,000 planes a year.

When the situation in Belgium was obviously exceedingly grave, Churchill came forward with his first broadcast to the nation as Prime Minister, and in these dark days his eloquence did much to put fresh spirit into the British people.

"It will be foolish to disguise the gravity of the hour," he declared. "It will be still more foolish to lose heart and courage or suppose that well-trained and well-equipped armies numbering three or four millions can be overcome by a raid of mechanized forces however formidable. . . . There will be many men and women in this island who, when the ordeal comes upon them, as come it will (he was referring to mass

air attacks) will feel comfort and even pride that they are sharing the perils of our lads at the front and are drawing away from them a part at least of the onslaught they have to bear. . . . We shall not hesitate to take every step, even the most drastic, to call forth our last inch of effort of which we are capable. Interests of property and hours of labour are nothing compared to the struggle for the life and honour, for life and freedom, to which we have vowed ourselves."

The news from Belgium became graver till at last it was announced that King Leopold had surrendered. This was the signal for an immediate outburst of recrimination in France led by Reynaud who declared in a broadcast speech from Paris :

"Eighteen days ago the King of the Belgians made his appeal for help to the Allies. The same King who appealed to the Allies to come to his help, the same King who in last December refused to have any staff talks with the Allies, the same King who joined the Allies has now handed Belgium over to the invader without a word of gratitude or admiration for the soldiers of the Allies." Reynaud then went on to allege that the King "took his decision against the unanimous advice of his ministers."

There followed extraordinary scenes in Paris when the Belgian Premier and members of his Government participated in a big demonstration before the statue of King Albert, Leopold's father, and young Belgians fixed a notice on the statue reading :—"Venerated King, who made our country great, give us strength to wash away the shame with which your unworthy successor has covered our unhappy Belgium. We shall avenge this treason."

The reactions in Britain were moderate and Mr. Churchill stated in the Commons :—"I have no intention of suggesting to the House that we should attempt at this moment to pass

judgment upon the action of the King of the Belgians in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Belgian Army. That army has fought very bravely and has both suffered and inflicted heavy losses."

Some time elapsed before the truth was finally told and the best summing-up of the situation I have seen was given by Mr. Jossleyn Hennessy in a broadcast in 1941. He was for a number of years Paris correspondent of the "News Chronicle" and afterwards Director of Information with the Government of India.

"The French Prime Minister's statement both in fact and in its implications was untrue," he said. "The fact is attested by numerous witnesses among whom are all the members of the Belgian Cabinet, Admiral Sir Roger Keyes (who was British Liaison Officer with King Leopold between May 10, the date of the German invasion of Belgium and May 27, eve of the Belgian surrender), and by the United States Ambassador to Belgium.

"All these are unanimous in attesting that King Leopold warned General Weygand in person on May 21 that unless the French army in France could break through the German line, which by then had almost cut off Belgium from France, the Allied armies in Belgium would be annihilated or reduced to a condition where further resistance would be impossible. General Weygand planned the attack which the King requested but it never came off. On May 25, a meeting of the British, French and Belgian Generals in Belgium re-affirmed that surrender of all but the forces which could be evacuated over the Channel to England was inevitable. The King informed them that he would continue to fight as long as he could to protect their evacuation but gave due notice that it was impossible to hold out much longer without more

Allied aid in the air and without supplies of food and ammunition.

"On May 27, all Belgian reserves were thrown into the battle and ammunition was largely exhausted. There remained to the Belgian forces an area equivalent approximately to 25 miles square, within which were crushed together the Belgian army, the Franco-British troops, the local population and hundreds of thousands of refugees, amounting in all to about 3,000,000 people. To have found fresh arms and ammunition for the Belgian army and to have fed these 3,000,000 people would have been impossible; further resistance would only have led to a massacre on a scale unknown to history.

"In these circumstances, the King of the Belgians, having carried out his promise to protect the evacuation of the French and British forces from Dunkirk, laid down his arms. He signed no armistice, he entered into no negotiations; he surrendered and was taken prisoner of war.

"Belgium has signed no separate peace with the enemy and her Government continues to wage war against Germany, pooling all her strength with Britain; ships, men, money, colonial output and produce. The defence of a part of the English coast has been entrusted to Belgian units and the Belgian Empire and merchant marine continue the fight.

"No shadow of reproach fell on the other small countries—Norway, Holland, Yugoslavia and Greece when organized armed resistance ceased on their national territories; to Belgium and to her King Leopold alone has the stigma of a shameful surrender been reserved. It is only just to a noble king and to a gallant people that the terrible accusation should be recognized as wholly without foundation. . . . .

"M. Reynaud's accusation was repeated by the Belgian Government which was then on French soil but that Govern-

ment, when furnished with the complete facts, immediately withdrew its strictures on the King and on September 2, 1940, for example, M. Albert de Vleeschauwer, Belgian Minister of Colonies, said in a public speech in Liverpool:

"Our King, His Majesty Leopold III, after personally leading his army in battle from the very beginning, wished to share the lot of his soldiers and was at the time of the surrender on May 28, made prisoner just as were his troops. As is the case of the regular army officers, he continues to be a prisoner and conducts himself under all circumstances as a prisoner, without taking any part in the government of our country's affairs."

As a result of an action involving a London paper, in June, 1941, King Leopold's honour was vindicated as shown in the following statement issued on the 30th by the Belgian Government in London.

"The history of the last seven days of the campaign of the Belgian Army in May, 1940, has been unfolded early this month before a British court.

"After the capitulation of the Belgian Army on May 28, 1940, the Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Roger Keyes, the unforgettable hero of Zeebrugge in the last war, who was British Liaison Officer with the Belgian Army from May 10 to May 27, 1940, in a public statement said that it was advisable to postpone any judgment on this tragic happening until every detail was available. In consequence of this statement the London "Daily Mirror" published editorials sharply criticizing the attitude of both the King of the Belgians and of Admiral Sir Roger Keyes.

"A libel law suit brought against the "Daily Mirror" by Sir Roger Keyes has just been concluded before the London Court of Justice.

"During the proceedings Sir Patrick Hastings, Counsel

for Sir Roger Keyes, told the story of the gallant and unforgettable fight of the Belgian Army. Sir Patrick disclosed the way in which the Belgian High Command accepted to withdraw from the strong and well-defended position the Belgians were holding on the river Scheldt in order to relieve the British Forces, weakly entrenched on the river Lys, so as to enable the Britishers to participate in an offensive movement ordered by General Weygand. For the sake of giving opportunity to the said offensive to develop, the Belgian Army did fight absolutely alone without respite and without hope, during four days and four nights, against at least eight German divisions of which several were motorized and against an overwhelming swarm of air fighters and bombers.

"Counsel for Sir Roger Keyes pointed out the many attempts of the King of the Belgians to warn the British and French commanding generals of the desperate position of his Army and of the necessity of a capitulation becoming unavoidable.

"Counsel for the "Daily Mirror" admitted that it was now clear that the attitude of Admiral Sir Roger Keyes had been fully justified and he did apologize on behalf of his client. The "Daily Mirror's" counsel declared also that it was now fully apparent that a grave injustice had been done to King Leopold III, and he begged His Majesty the King of the Belgians to accept his most sincere and respectful apologies.

"Finally counsel for the "Daily Mirror" stated that an agreement had been reached about the financial reparations demanded by Sir Roger Keyes.

"The Hon. Mr. Justice Tucker, on the bench, approved the agreement and in doing so stated that out of the usual occurrence in matters of Press prosecution, this case had been useful in the way of helping to the satisfactory clearing up of a much discussed point of current history."

With the evacuation of Dunkirk Hitler was faced with the greatest decision of his life—whether to smash on into France, or with a less all-out effort against the French, attempt an invasion of Britain. That Churchill realized that perhaps the fate of his country was in the balance was evident from his address to the House of Commons, on the completion of the Dunkirk withdrawal, when he said—"We must not blind ourselves to the fact that what has happened in France and Belgium is a colossal military disaster." The French Army had been weakened, the Belgian Army lost, valuable mining districts and factories had fallen into the hands of the enemy; he was in possession of the Channel ports and the Allies had to be prepared for another blow immediately against France or Britain. But in this very reverse lay the seeds of victory. A miracle of deliverance had been accomplished at Dunkirk—accomplished by the valour, perseverance, discipline, resource and skill of the Army, Navy, and most of all, the Royal Air Force.

Many stories had been circulated, the Premier pointed out, of how the Germans were going to invade Britain. No idea was too fantastic to be considered but if all did their duty "we shall prove ourselves once again able to defend our island home and outlive the menace of tyranny, if necessary, for years and, if necessary, alone.

"We shall never surrender," he declared, "and even if this island is subjected, then our Empire will carry on the struggle until in God's good time the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the liberation and rescue of the Old."

But with the greed of a successful conqueror Hitler decided that he must grasp the richest fruit first and that was to be found in the fair fields of France. So with an overwhelming force of men and armour he ordered his generals on to Paris.

There are actually three schools of thought regarding Hitler's decision—

1. He was not prepared for the speed with which his armies overran Belgium and Holland and on into France, and therefore did not have his plans cut and dried at the time of Dunkirk for an invasion of Britain.

2. That he greatly underestimated the state of preparedness in England for an invasion, and if he had realized that there was such a lack of arms, munitions, armour and air power, he would have attempted to cross the Channel, mainly with the use of air-borne troops.

3. That the lust to overrun France immediately proved too much for him, and he could not restrain himself.

Point 3 I think is correct. Paris lay like a glittering jewel in front of him, and the Fuehrer could not restrain himself from urging his armies on with all haste to the capital of France. Soon all idea of generalship by the French army leaders was gone; they could do nothing against the overwhelming mass of men and armour thrown against them and on the morning of June 14th it was reported by Mr. W. C. Bullitt, U. S. Ambassador, that the German Army was "inside the gates of Paris."

This proved a shattering blow to France's morale. The excuse was made that the capital was of no "strategic importance," but with the capital gone, the heart and soul had gone out of French resistance.

When the invaders entered, the city was almost deserted and an uncanny silence lay over the streets. Those citizens who decided to remain either stayed in their homes or sat in their shops with the shutters down. An Indian friend who spent three days in the city under Nazi occupation before making his escape has often told me of the last few

days. As the noise of the guns came nearer an air of listless, hopeless casualness spread over the people of Paris. They felt that their government which had fled to the south-west had let them down miserably. Gone was the old spirit of Paris which had made the inhabitants in bygone years fight for their freedom at the barricades. The corrupt rulers of the country had at last been found out and the city stood stark naked, deserted, before the Huns. But, according to my informant, the Germans who first entered the gates had been well disciplined and behaved with the utmost decorum—though when in full possession of the country they soon changed their tune—and the first thing they did was to repair the electric supply, and the city which had so long been in darkness, shone forth in all her brilliance. But it was a shoddy brilliance—like some whore who had been picked up from the gutter and decked out for the occasion. And the Huns were also very generous for they allowed many citizens to depart for the south and the south-west—why ?—because they wanted the roads blocked with refugees, so that military traffic would be completely dislocated ; and so as to spread as much misery and confusion as possible, Goering's gallant airmen rained death and destruction from the skies once these hapless refugees had got well out on the roads. Meanwhile the French Premier was appealing for assistance. In a broadcast he cried to America—"I asked President Roosevelt repeatedly to extend American help to the Allies as far as possible within the laws of the United States. To-night, I have addressed him a last appeal. It is no longer the time for half-hearted measures."

In reply President Roosevelt assured France that the United States would redouble its efforts and send planes and munitions to the Allies so long as the French continued "in the defence of their liberties."

"I wish to reiterate in the most emphatic terms," he declared, "that, making every possible effort during the present conditions, the Government of the United States have made possible for the Allied Armies to obtain, during the weeks that have just passed, aeroplanes, artillery and munitions of many kinds; and that the Government, so long as the Allied Governments continue to resist, will redouble their efforts in this direction.

"I believe that every week that passes will see additional material on its way to the Allied nations.

"In accordance with the policy not to recognize the results of conquest of territory acquired through military aggression, the Government of the United States will not consider valid any attempts, impinged by force, upon the independence and territorial integrity of France.

"In these hours so heart-rending for the French people, I send you assurances of my utmost sympathy, and can further assure you that, as long as the French people continue in defence of their liberty, which constitutes the cause of popular institutions throughout the world, so long they can rest assured that material supplies will be sent to them from the United States in ever-increasing quantities and kind.

"I know that you will understand that these statements carry with them no implication of military commitment. Only Congress can make such commitments."

But Roosevelt's assurance was of no avail. The Reynaud Ministry tendered its resignation on June 16th and Pétain took over to prepare the way for France's surrender.

On the day that Reynaud resigned Churchill made his dramatic attempt to form a union of Britain and France to carry on the struggle together, so that "France and Britain would no longer be two but one Franco-British Union."

The constitution of the union provided for joint organs

of defence, foreign, financial and economic policy. "Every citizen of France would enjoy immediately the citizenship of Great Britain. Every British subject would become a citizen of France. Both countries would enjoy the responsibility for repair of the devastation of war, wherever it occurred in their territories, and the resources of both should be equally, and as one, applied to that purpose."

During the war there would be a single War Cabinet and all the forces of Britain and France, whether on land, sea or air, would be placed under its direction.

But France sued for peace and on June 18th Churchill declared in the House of Commons that Britain would fight on, concluding with these words :—"We abate nothing of our just demands for all conquered countries—all shall be restored. The battle of France is over, the battle of Britain is about to begin. If we lose it the whole world, including the United States of America, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age. Let us, therefore, brace ourselves to our duty. so that men will say, 'This was their greatest hour."

And so I end this part of the history of the war, except for a reference to Italy's ill-fated decision to join in when the loot seemed ready at hand.

By mid-April it became evident that Italy was preparing for a fresh adventure and by the 19th growing attention was being given by the Press in Britain to the anti-British tone of the Italian Press and in particular to the complete misrepresentation of news of naval engagements at that time.

News from Italy at the beginning of May showed that she was taking steps in preparation for war and there were despatches from Yugoslavia that spoke of big Italian troop movements. When Germany started her attack on France the Italians became bolder, talking loudly of their "naval

strength" and seeing their ally going from victory to victory, a warlike spirit surged through the country, especially in Rome, where defenceless British citizens had to withstand assaults and insults.

In mid-May President Roosevelt sent a peace appeal to Mussolini—one of several—but on the 17th, following the passing of the Budget (which showed that the expenditure for 1939-40, estimated at 29 milliard lire, had risen to 36 milliard, and in consequence, the deficit had risen from 4¾ milliard, as estimated, to 6¼ milliard), Count Suardo, President of the Senate, addressing the Senators in the presence of Mussolini said :—"The Italian people press around you, the Duce, to form a body of energy and will, ready for your orders, because they know that the path you will choose aims at Italy's greatness and power. We are indignant at new irritations, which recall the coalition of 52 enemies against a single nation."

Finally on June 10th, with France almost beaten, Mussolini, with a grand flourish of trumpets, entered the war.

"Proletarian and Fascist Italy," he raved, "is for the third time on her feet, strong, proud and united, as she has never been before. We shall conquer to give at last a long period of peace with justice to Italy, Europe and the world."

To-day Mussolini is a hunted criminal and his country is being scorched with war.

Italy did not have much fighting to do against France, and whatever may have been expected of Turkey, in view of her pact with Britain and France the previous year, nothing materialized, except "the warmest support for the Allies," expressed in the Turkish Chamber of Deputies.

Egypt broke with Italy and the stage was set for the long ding-dong struggle in the Mediterranean, in which Italy was first to lose her armies and eventually her Duce.

CHAPTER VIII

India and the War

In considering India and the present world struggle, I should like first of all to deal with one all-important point—are the country's leaders anti-Fascist or not ?—and in answering this question, we can best do so by going back a year or two before the start of the war.

Despite their own great domestic problems, those who led the people of India showed themselves during the critical years before 1939 vitally interested in what was going on in Europe, and naturally more so, what was happening in the Far East. There was the greatest sympathy throughout India for China in her struggle and every attempt possible was made to send some contribution, however small, to the Chinese. Therefore the Congress sent a medical mission to serve on the battle-fields of China, and there was a nation-wide boycott of Japanese goods. By their speeches and resolutions the Congress leaders especially showed the deepest concern over developments in the Far East and the policy of "appeasement" in Europe was viewed with widespread dissatisfaction. Aggression is abhorent to the vast majority of Indians and they looked upon Hitler and Mussolini as two sources of great evil. This spirit was reflected in all those who led the country and except in the case of Subhas Bose (who eventually had to leave the Congress when he showed his Fascist tendencies) India's foremost men, one and all, made it plain that they had not the slightest sympathy for the doctrines preached in Germany or Italy, and even more so in Japan. Therefore a greater wrong cannot be done patriotic Indians than to say that they would wish for

the victory of the Fascist Powers or would have dealings with them.

One of the greatest internationalists of our time and one who voiced India's sentiments towards the aggressor nations was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. During the height of the Civil War he went to Spain and received a very warm welcome from the Republicans, and just before the outbreak of this war, he visited China and was given an equally warm reception by the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Chungking Government.

All his writings tell of his great hatred for Fascism and, as I have stated above, he often acted as the voice of India, so I shall quote from a few of his articles.

Dealing with Spain, in June 1939, he wrote :—" Was it only a year ago that I was in Spain ? Ages have gone by since then with all their burden of shock and sorrow, and the counting of time by the passage of the sun and the moon seems a poor and unreal measure of the flood of emotions and experiences that add to our years. The men and women that I met in Spain, brave and gracious and vital, emblems of a nation's hope, are phantom figures to-day. Many are dead, many others are wandering refugees. But memory's storehouse is crowded by them and by the impressions I gathered during these few days in Spain. Sometimes these impressions are so vivid that it seems but yesterday that I was there, and sometimes it seems a thousand years ago, and I feel old, very old.......

" We met many people in Barcelona and the neighbourhood and some of them stand out, vivid and living pictures in the mind. And yet the individual lost significance in the mass phenomena that we saw. In the early days of the revolt, as we had read and were told, the Government and the people were totally unprepared. Chaos reigned every-

where, Government offices did not function, the army, such as it was, went to pieces. Yet behind this chaos there was a fierce will to resist and the people, unarmed and badly armed, hurled themselves at the advancing enemy. They put an end to the dreams of an easy victory which General Franco nourished, and checked his armies in many places. Madrid was saved by a supreme effort, and for two years the flag of the Republic proudly flew over the battlements, although the enemy occupied the outskirts and bombed the city almost daily."

Of the International Brigade he wrote—"The Brigade was spread out over a wide area and we had no time to visit each section of it. We went to the British and American battalions, and once we had spotted them, we found large numbers of soldiers on the sides of the hills and in the valley below. They were camping under the most primitive conditions and had made temporary huts out of mud and shrubs, or had dug out a small shelter. There was nothing in the way of comfort, and yet they were the jolliest crowd I have come across. Their spirits were infectious and watching their enthusiasm and determination it was difficult to conceive that the cause they served could ever lose.

"We talked to many of them. They had come as volunteers from distant places, drawn by that strange attraction for serving a cause which has moved men and women throughout the ages. They had left their families and homes, their work and their comforts, and of their own free will chosen this hard life with danger as their constant companion and death a frequent visitor. As I watched them laugh and play, my mind travelled back to two years of warfare and the proud record of this Brigade during these terrible years of misfortune and disaster. They had served the Republic many a time and thousands of them lay buried in

the soil of Spain. How many of these light-hearted youths I saw would never return to their homes again and their loved ones would wait for them in vain ?

"Only a few days after I saw them, they were in the battleline again, and a little later they were rushed to the Ebro to stem the fierce onslaught of Franco's armies. Many remained there for ever, among them some whom I remembered as having given my autograph.

"Reluctantly I came away from these gallant men of the International Brigade, for something in me wanted to stay on this inhospitable looking hill-side which sheltered so much human courage, so much of what was worthwhile in life."

Pandit Nehru has written much about China, and it is to be hoped that the Chinese people will always remember what a friend he has been to their country, especially in the pre-war days, when so little real attention was paid to them. For instance, writing in June 1939, he said :— "Behind the war and inhumanity and violence, there is something happening in China which is of vital significance. A new China is rising, rooted in her culture, but shedding the lethargy and weaknesses of ages, strong and united, modern and with a human outlook. The unity that China has achieved in these years of trial is astonishing and inspiring. It is not merely unity in defence, but a unity in work and in building up. Behind the war-fronts, in the vast undeveloped hinterland of China, there are vast schemes afoot which are changing the face of the country. In spite of continuous danger of bombing from the air, industries are growing up, and what is especially interesting, a scheme of co-operatives for the small and cottage industries is taking rapid shape, even within earshot of the guns. . . .

"This is the new China that is growing up in the smoke

of war and in the midst of devastation on an unparalleled scale. We have much to learn from her."

One of Nehru's greatest friends was the eminent anti-Fascist Ernst Toller, and when he heard of his death he wrote :— "Ernst Toller is dead, killed by his own hand. His hand may have done the deed, but he was done to death by the malignant spirit of brutal violence which reigns in Europe to-day under the names of Fascism and Nazism. How many murders, and that crushing of the soul that is worse than murder, stand to its credit during the long nightmare of the last six years! For the idealist and the sensitive in spirit the world grows more and more difficult to endure, the wide spaces narrow down and enclose and stifle, and escape comes after only through death. Those of them that are fortunate die fighting for their ideals against the evil that oppresses them. But real tragedy comes to those for whom life has lost all purpose, all meaning, all hope.

"Toller was a rare spirit, gentle and sensitive, with the genius of a poet and with a poet's prophetic insight at times, who found the growing violence an intolerable burden. Those who knew him loved him as a dear and precious comrade, but scores of thousands came to know him intimately through his writings, his brilliant plays, his moving letters from prison, his sad autobiography—'I was a German.'—For Spain he laboured feverishly, forgetting his piled-up sorrows in the work in hand—for Spain was not Spain only but the new world locked in a death struggle with the barbarian hordes of reaction and brutal violence."

I have quoted the above extracts from Pandit Nehru's writings as, apart from his personal reactions, they reflected the general feelings of most nationalist Indians towards Spain and China in their struggle against Fascism. (In this connection it is worth recalling that frequently Mr. Gandhi

left the moulding of the international policy of the Congress to Nehru as being better able to handle such affairs).

This outlook was again reflected in the general attitude held by the Congress towards world affairs in pre-war days. For instance, at the Faizpur Session in 1936 it was stated in one of the resolutions :—

> "Fascist aggression has increased, the Fascist Powers forming alliances and grouping themselves together for war with the intention of dominating Europe and the world and crushing political and social freedom. The Congress is fully conscious of the necessity of facing this world menace in co-operation with the progressive nations and the peoples of the world."

Then again at the Haripura Session in 1938 Fascist aggression was condemned, as "bringing nearer the menace of war," while in the spring of 1939 it was decided at Tripuri that :—

> "The Congress records its entire disapproval of the British foreign policy culminating in the Munich Pact, the Anglo-Italian Agreement and the recognition of Rebel Spain. This policy has been one of deliberate betrayal of democracy, repeated breaches of pledges, the ending of the system of collective security, and co-operation with governments which are avowed enemies of democracy and freedom The Congress disassociates itself entirely from the British foreign policy which has consistently aided Fascist Powers and helped the destruction of democratic countries."

Before I deal with nationalist India's attitude after the outbreak of war, I shall give a few notes on one who started off a patriot but developed Fascist tendencies and finally joined the Japanese—Subhas Chandra Bose. He had had a long political career, ever since he, as a young man, returned

from England in 1919 having given up his I.C.S. appointment to throw in his lot with those who were shaping the destiny of India. He was specially associated with the late C. R. Das, but even in those days, when after the death of his chief considerable power came into his hands he was strongly criticised for his dictatorial policy. It was during the first 18 years of his political career he did not take to non-violence as a doctrine and was in direct sympathy with the Terrorist Movement in Bengal. During these years his patriotism, however at variance with other leaders of the national movement, was unquestioned and he spent a very large portion of them in jail. Continuous imprisonment took terrible toll of his health and he was allowed to go abroad to Europe in 1932. He established his headquarters in Vienna for treatment and these years between 1932 and 1936 mark the final entrenchment of Fascist doctrine within him. It is said that he frequently met leading Fascists and Nazis in Europe from whom he imbibed inspiration for dictatorship which was in itself homogenous to his nature. In view of much that happened later, one is struck by the tone of Fascism which is apparent in his proscribed book— "The Indian Struggle." The title and the sentiments have an unsavoury familiarity with "Mein Kampf." One also wonders whether his submission and acceptance of the Gandhian non-violent doctrine for the first time in 1937 was a result of his instructions from his Fascist friends so as to be able to capture Congress and mass support. But there is nothing tangible to confirm this except the events that followed.

In 1937 as a result of his long and patriotic service to India, Mr. Gandhi nominated him as a candidate for the presidentship of the Indian National Congress. Nationalist India was delighted at this cementing of bonds between the Mahatma and the Bengal leader. Everybody thought that

at last the movement would advance in a co-ordinated way. Therefore it was with some misgiving that the public received the announcement that the next year Gandhi had refused Subhas Bose his blessings for a second term. Bose decided to contest and won the presidential election against Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Gandhi's nominee. The general opinion was against what they considered a dictatorship of Gandhi. Very few people were aware of Bose's growing Japanese affiliations and his general direction of Congress affairs along Fascist lines. But the Congress High Command was fully aware of this and took the action they did to safeguard against Fascism in the Congress ranks. At this stage Subhas Bose founded his party, The Forward Block.

From then on Subhas Bose discarded his pose of loyalty towards Gandhi and the Congress leaders. Hoping to capture the Socialist and progressive elements within the Congress he became bitterly hostile against what he called "Right-Wing dictatorship." His final break with the Congress came with his deliberate disavowal of discipline with regard to certain resolutions adopted at the A.-I.C.C. meeting in Bombay in June 1939, which prohibited the inauguration of the civil disobedience campaign by individuals or parties without first obtaining the consent of the provincial bodies and discouraging unnecessary criticism of the Congress Ministries. Subhas Bose initiated protest meetings in spite of repeated warnings from the President and as a result of his revolt and defiance he was debarred from holding any elective office under the Congress for three years. This caused a fragment of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee to break away under Subhas Bose and it worked as a parallel body against the official organization. The breach was complete and Subhas Bose began to work out his Fascist plans without coming under the discipline

of the Congress. During this period he never ceased his attacks on the Congress and Gandhi, blaming the latter for his compromising attitude towards the British Government. Thus long before Left-Wing politicians or the British Government awoke to Subhas Bose's real ideas and policies the Congress, following its line of anti-Fascist partisanship, had succeeded in reading the correct motives of this misguided patriot and had not hesitated in taking whatever action, drastic though it seemed, in trying to arrest the injection of Fascism into its ranks.

In conclusion I herewith quote some interesting views expressed on Subhas Bose by "The Statesman" when he joined the Axis.

"Mr. Bose's views are those of the Nazis, and he makes no secret of it. Some people in this country are as unwilling to believe that he is sincere or to take the trouble to read his books, as the appeasers were to believe Hitler was in earnest or to bother about *Mein Kampf*. In his book *The Indian Struggle,* Mr. Bose quoted Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru precisely in order to differ from him in his preference for Communism rather than Fascism. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking at the end of 1933, said: 'I do believe that fundamentally the choice before the world to-day is one between some form of Communism and some form of Fascism, and I am all for the former, that is Communism. I dislike Fascism intensely and indeed I do not think it is anything more than a crude and brutal effort of the present capitalist order to preserve itself at any cost. There is no middle road between Fascism and Communism.'

"This view Mr. Bose challenges as 'fundamentally wrong.' He gives five reasons why Communism will not be adopted in India, and indicates clearly his preference for Fascism. But there are certain traits common to both which

he likes, and therefore what he really looks for is a synthesis of Communism and Fascism. This he thinks is what India in particular needs. The common traits that appealed to Mr. Bose and on which he proposed to build up his synthesis were (1) supremacy of the State over the individual; (2) denunciation of parliamentary democracy; (3) dictatorship of a party and ruthless suppression of all minorities; (4) a planned industrial reorganization. 'These common traits will form the basis of the new synthesis, and it will be India's task to work out this synthesis.' He outlined a programme for his future party, which would emerge out of a left revolt against the Congress—a prophecy fulfilled later in the Forward Bloc. The party would, he said, stand for a strong Central Government with dictatorial powers, not for 'Mid-Victorian democracy' but 'Government by a strong party bound together by military discipline'."

There was a strange sense of unreality in India with the start of the war. It seemed almost as if hostilities had started in another planet, and little was it dreamt that the fighting would eventually come right up to India's eastern doorstep. That feeling applied to the ordinary man-in-the-street; in political circles there was immediate questioning as to where India stood in the struggle. But to the observer of reactions in everyday surroundings it seemed that the general impression was—"Well, after all these false alarms the war has actually started but we are not directly affected."

There had been a lot of talk about activities by Axis agents in India, particularly German, but most of it had been dismissed as idle gossip. That there had been not a little activity was however shown by an interesting article that appeared in "The Statesman" shortly after the declaration of war. It stated :—

"Germany does not confine her ambitions and expansion

to Europe. Her trade representatives, her 'colonies' and clubs, above all the rigid political organization of the Nazi Party, extend to every corner of the globe.

"Of recent years she has paid increasing attention to India, where she saw a profitable market for her goods, in particular chemicals, drugs and electrical material, and where she hoped to extend her political influence by various activities of a 'cultural' nature. An indication of this Nazi concern with India, together with other parts of the British Empire, is shown by two recent visits of important German politicians, both of them standing high in the councils of the Nazi Party.

"Readers will remember the recent visits to India of Dr. Schacht, former President of the Reichsbank. Ostensibly here simply on holiday, Dr. Schacht was in Madras constrained to admit that trade matters "might have been discussed."

"A visitor of almost equal importance, whose arrival was, however, less haralded, was Herr Schwarz van Berk, editor of Dr. Goebbels' newspaper 'Der Angriff.' Van Berk has visited many countries in the British and French colonial empires and has reported extensively on their strategic importance.

"His report on Queensland, for example, is in itself relatively harmless. The text may be found in 'The Attack from Within' by Elwyn Jones, recently published as a Penguin Special, and we shall not quote it here. When one remembers, however, that a Nazi spy plot was recently uncovered in Queensland, whereby a bogus company had succeeded in obtaining information about iron ore deposits and the suitability of certain lonely harbours as seaplane bases, the presence of a highly trained representative of the Propaganda Ministry has added significance.

"Van Berk visited, besides India and Australia, the

Dutch East Indies, Spain and Spanish Morocco, the Sudan, Palestine and Syria. His report on the French administration in Syria was so hostile that the French authorities refused him permission to fly over French territory on his return from India. When this news was received in Berlin, Goebbels at once threatened to expel all French Press correspondents from Germany till the ban was withdrawn.

"While in Calcutta, Van Berk gave a series of lectures at the German Club on 'patriotic' subjects. A course on the best methods of answering accusations of Hitlerian bad faith was much appreciated by the Colony.

"The part played by the German Club in Nazi political machinations in Calcutta is perhaps not realized. Many people may imagine that this Club was merely a centre of recreation and perfectly harmless. It was nothing of the kind. It was the very centre of the Nazi political organization in Bengal; there German residents obtained their instructions, listened to lectures, attended party meetings, often compulsory.

"Above all, through the Club German citizens, Austrians, Czechs and *émigrés* were subjected to a constant espionage by their fellow-countrymen. Every word or action which could be construed as hostile to the Hitler *régime* was instantly reported to the *Gauleiter* (district leader), who passed on anything of importance in regular reports to the Nazi Foreign Organization, which is incorporated in the German Foreign Office.

"Some time ago many people in Calcutta may have known a young, cheery and rubicund assistant in Agfa's called Herr Bischof. A pleasant enough young man and then easy to get on with, though of no influence or importance.

"But Bischof was a sound Nazi Party man, and when

the German Government began to turn its attention to the East he, like many another Party member of little previous influence, found sudden promotion. He was made *Gauleiter*.

"From that moment Bischof became the autocrat of the German colony. It was known that part of his duties was to write regular reports to the Party in Germany, and on the 'political reliability' of a man as shown in these reports depended his prospects of advancement, perhaps his very liberty. For a time Bischof held all the German colony, even the Consul-General, in the hollow of his hand, for even the Reich diplomatic service is not immune from Party scrutiny.

"More recently, however, control to a large extent fell into new hands. As Vice-Consul, a certain Dr. Pausch, was sent out from Germany, and, when Count Podewils-Duerniz, the Consul-General, went on leave, became acting Consul-General. Pausch took over the functions of reporting on his countrymen, formerly exercised by Bischof, and it was widely believed among the German colony that the absence of Count Podewils-Duerniz was due to an unfavourable report sent by Pausch to Berlin.

"To an almost unlimited extent the Nazi Party permeated all German activities in India. In a lecture to the Himalayan Club, Dr. Schaefer, leader of a recent expedition to Tibet, revealed that he and all members of his party were members of the S. S. (Black Guards) and that the expedition had the blessings of Herr Himmler, chief of the notorious Gestapo, who he said was a well-known 'amateur scientist.'

"While the best type of German in Calcutta was as pleasant a person to meet as anyone, there tended often in the Colony to be an arrogance of attitude which showed that the Germans regarded themselves as masters and others as inferiors. This was clearly revealed in their treatment

of servants at the German Club, to whom they invariably behaved with peremptory rudeness and on occasion, according to reliable witnesses, with actual physical violence."

The first development of a political nature on the outbreak of war was Mr. Gandhi's visit to Simla where he had an interview with Lord Linlithgow, when it was reported that he broke down when he pictured the destruction that might be caused in England during the conflict. He told the Viceroy that his own sympathies were with Britain and France from the purely humanitarian point of view. It was also stated that no understanding was reached between them. In a statement to the Press, Mr. Gandhi declared :—

> "It almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force, and, as Mr. Chamberlain says, he will listen to nothing else. It is in the midst of this catastrophe, without parallel, that Congressmen and all responsible Indians, individually and collectively, have to decide what part India is to play in this terrible drama."

The first week of war brought forth a host of statements —pledges of loyalty from the Princes—and dozens from individuals, only two of which are worth recording here.

The first was from Dr. Tagore who declared :—

> "The conscience of the world has been profoundly shocked by the latest manifestation of the arrogant unrighteousness of the present rulers of Germany ; this is but the culmination of a long series of intimidation of the weak, from the suppression of the Jewish people in in the Reich to the rape of that gallant and truly liberal state of Czechoslovakia.
>
> "Our voice may not perhaps reach the ears of the faction in power in Germany, for it is not borne on the wings of high explosive shells. I can only hope that

humanity may emerge triumphant, and that the decencies of life and freedom for the oppressed peoples may be firmly established for all time to come in a world purified through this terrible bath of blood."

The second statement was by Pandit Nehru, who had hurried back to India from his China visit. He told Pressmen at Dum Dum :—

"You will appreciate that it is not proper for me, or for any one else, to go about giving his private advice on a matter of such grave import (the international crisis). There should be unity of thought, followed by unity of action.

"In order to have unity of action there must be a certain unity of thought and full consultation and co-operation. At this stage it is right and proper that nationalist India should speak with one voice and act in a united way. All of us must sink our individual preferences, and not air our private views before this consultation has taken place and a policy decided upon.

"I earnestly hope that the Congress will act worthily at this hour of great crisis and thus advance the cause of India's freedom as well as world freedom."

While the Congress High Command were meeting at Wardha in mid-September, the Working Committee of the Moslem League met at Delhi and in a resolution declared that :—

"While Moslem India stand against exploitation of the people of India and has repeatedly declared in favour of 'free India' it is equally opposed to the domination of Hindu majority over Mussalmans and over minorities and vassalization of Moslem India, and is irrevocably opposed to any Federal objective which must necessarily result in a majority community rule under the guise of democracy and

parliamentary system of Government. Such a constitution is totally unsuited to the genius of the peoples of the country which is composed of various nationalities, and does not constitute a national State.

"The Moslem League condemns unprovoked aggression and the doctrine that 'might is right' and upholds the principles of freedom of humanity and 'that the will of the strongest irrespective of right and justice cannot be allowed to prevail.' The Committee express their deep sympathy for Poland, England and France. The Committee, however, feel that real and solid Moslem co-operation and support to Great Britain in this hour of her trial cannot be secured successfully if His Majesty's Government and the Viceroy are unable to secure to the Mussalmans justice and fairplay in the Congress-governed provinces. The Committee strongly urge upon His Majesty's Government and the Viceroy and the Governor-General to direct the Governors to exercise their special powers where any provincial Minister fails to secure justice and fairplay to the Mussalmans or where they resort to oppression or interference with their political, economic, social and cultural rights, in accordance with the sacred promises, assurances and declarations repeatedly made by Great Britain in consequence of which these special powers were expressly embodied in the statute.

"While the Moslem League stands for the freedom of India, the Committee further urge upon His Majesty's Government and ask for an assurance that no declaration regarding the question of constitutional advance for India should be made without the consent and approval of the All-India Moslem League nor any constitution be framed and finally adopted by His Majesty's Government and the British Parliament without such consent and approval.

"The Committee urge upon His Majesty's Government to satisfy the Arab national demands.

"If full effective and honourable co-operation of the Mussalmans is desired by the British Government in the grave crisis which is facing the world to-day and if it is desired to bring it to a successful termination, it must create a sense of security and satisfaction amongst the Mussalmans and take into its confidence the Moslem League which is the only organization that can speak on behalf of Moslem India.

"At this critical and difficult juncture the Committee appeal to every Mussalman to stand solidly under the flag of the All-India Moslem League with a solemn and sacred determination to make every sacrifice, for on it depend the future destiny and the honour of the ninety millions of Mussalmans in India."

The Congress held a series of meetings at Wardha and decided to defer their decision towards the war, so as "to allow time for further elucidation of the issues at stake," but at the same time they invited the British Government "to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of the people?" (A fuller summary of this statement will be found at the end of this chapter).

Mr. Gandhi also issued a statement in connection with the Wardha discussions in which he declared :—"I was sorry to find myself alone in seeking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally. This could be done on a purely non-violent basis. But the

Committee had a tremendous responsibility to discharge. It could not take a purely non-violent attitude. It felt that the nation had not imbibed the non-violent spirit requisite for the possession of the strength which disdains to take advantage of the difficulty of the opponent but in stating the reason for its conclusion the Committee desired to show the greatest consideration to the English."

Of considerable interest at that time was an article by Mr. Gandhi in the "Harijan," entitled "The Source of My Sympathy," in which he declared that "I have come to the conclusion that Herr Hitler is responsible for the war."

The article read as follows : "The statement made by me just after my interview with His Excellency the Viceroy has had a mixed reception. It has been described as sentimental twaddle by one critic and as a statesmanlike pronouncement by another.

"There are variations between the two extremes. I suppose all the critics are right from their own standpoint and all are wrong from the absolute standpoint which in this instance is that of the author. He wrote for nobody's satisfaction but his own. I abide by every word I have said in it. It has no political value, except what every humanitarian opinion may possess. Inter-relation of ideas cannot be prevented.

"I have a spirited protest from a correspondent. It calls for a reply. I do not reproduce the letter as parts of it I do not understand myself. But there is no difficulty in catching its drift. The main argument is this :

"If you shed tears over the possible destruction of the English Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey, have you no tears for the possible destruction of the monuments of Germany ? And why do you sympathize with England and France and not with Germany ? If you were a German,

had the resourcefulness of Hitler, and were a believer in the doctrine of retaliation, you would have done what Hitler is doing. I suggest to you that there is no difference between Chamberlain and Hitler. You have done an injustice to Hitler by comparing him with Chamberlain, to the former's disadvantage. I fancy that your emotion at the Viceregal Lodge had the better of your judgment."

"No one, perhaps, has described English misdeeds more forcibly, subject to truth, than I have. No one has resisted England more effectively, perhaps, than I have, and my desire for and power of resistance remain unabated. But there are seasons for speech and action, as there are seasons for silence and inaction.

"In the dictionary of *satyagraha* there is no enemy. But as I have no desire to prepare a new dictionary for *satyagrahis*, I use the old words, giving them a new meaning. A *satyagrahi* loves his so-called enemy even as his friend. He owns no enemy as a *satyagrahi*. I must wish well to England. My wishes regarding Germany were, and they still are, irrelevant for the moment. But I have said in a few words in my statement that I would not care to erect the freedom of my country on the remains of despoiled Germany. I should be as much moved by a contemplation of the possible destruction of Germany's monuments. Herr Hitler stands in no need of my sympathy.

"In assessing the present merits, the past misdeeds of England and the good deeds of Germany are irrelevant. Rightly or wrongly, and irrespective of what the other Powers have done before under similar circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that Herr Hitler is responsible for the war. I do not judge his claim. It is highly probable that his right to incorporate Danzig in Germany is beyond question

if the Danzig Germans desire to give up their independent status.

"It may be that his claim to appropriate the Polish Corridor is a just claim. My complaint is that he will not let the claim be examined by an independent tribunal. It is no answer to the rejection of the appeal for submission to arbitration that it came from interested quarters. Even a thief may conceivably make a correct appeal to his fellow-thief. I think I am right in saying that the whole world was anxious that Herr Hitler should allow his demand to be examined by an impartial tribunal.

"If he succeeds in his design, his success will be no proof of the justness of his claim. It will be proof that the law of the jungle is still a great force in human affairs. It will be one more proof that though we humans have changed the form we have not changed the manners of the beast.

"I hope it is now clear to my critics that my sympathy for England and France is not a result of momentary emotion or, in cruder language, of hysteria. It is derived from the never-drying fountain of non-violence which my breast has nursed for 50 years. I claim no infallibility for my judgment. All I claim is that my sympathy for England and France is reasoned. I invite those who accept the premises on which my sympathy is based to join me. What shape it should take is another matter. Alone, I can but pray. And so I told His Excellency that my sympathy had no concrete value in the face of the destruction that is facing those who are directly engaged in the war."

On September 26th the Mahatma made a second journey to Simla to meet the Viceroy and they had their longest talk to that date—over three hours. The subjects they discussed remained a matter for speculation.

Addressing a meeting at Allahabad Pandit Nehru

explained that the Wardha statement did not give a final decision which would depend upon what response England made in this respect. But the position that the Congress made clear was that it would not bargain and had clearly stated its position. He agreed that relations with England could not be set at nought overnight but the Congress wanted a clear declaration by England of freedom and democracy in India, in effect if not in legal form. The three points that the statement implied were (1) freedom and equality; (2) ending of imperialism in the world; and (3) a free country in the event of peace. The statement of the Working Committee had taken into account the new forces that were arising so that India might not be charged with stabbing in the back the forces of democracy and freedom in the world. The Congress, he said, might not have an understanding with imperialism, but it could surely come to an understanding with the British people.

Early in October Nehru and Jinnah met in Delhi and the former and Dr. Rajendra Prasad met the Viceroy, while the Mahatma and Mr. Jinnah had individual interviews with Lord Linlithgow, but little came of their talks and when the Working Committee met at Wardha on October 9th the invitation to the British Government to state their war and peace aims was repeated.

A few days later Lord Linlithgow made two announcements regarding the political future of India and the country's attitude towards the war.

He stated that he was authorized by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they would be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties and interests in India, and with the Indian Princes with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in the framing of such constitutional modifi-

cations as might seem desirable. He announced the immediate establishment of a consultative group, representative of all major political parties in British India and the Indian Princes, which would have as its object the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war and with questions relating to war activities. (A fuller summary will be found at the end of this chapter).

The Viceroy's statement was not nearly explicit enough to satisfy the Congress leaders and when the Working Committee met again it was decided, as a consequence of Lord Linlithgow's declaration of policy, that the Congress Ministers in the Provinces should resign.

The following resolution was passed :—"The Working Committee is of opinion that the Viceroy's statement in answer to the Congress invitation for a clear declaration of British war aims, particularly in their application to India, is wholly unsatisfactory and calculated to rouse resentment among all those who were anxious to gain and are intent upon gaining India's independence. This invitation was made not only on behalf of the people of India but of the millions of people all over the world who were weary of war and violence and Fascist and Imperialistic systems which exploited nations and peoples and were ultimately the causes of war and who yearned for a new order of peace and freedom. The Viceroy's statement is an unequivocal reiteration of the old policy.

"The Committee regards the mention of the differences amongst the sevearl parties as a screen to hide the true intentions of Great Britain. What the Committee had asked for was a declaration of the war aims as a test of Britain's *bona fides* regarding India, irrespective of the attitude of opposing parties and groups. The Congress has always stood for the amplest guarantee of the rights of minorities.

The freedom the Congress claimed was not for the Congress or any particular group or community, but for the nation, and all communities in India that go to build that nation. The only way to establish this freedom and to ascertain the will of the nation as a whole is through a democratic process which gives full opportunity to all. The Committee must, therefore, regard the Viceroy's statement as in every way unfortunate.

"The Committee calls upon the Congress Ministries to tender their resignations. The Committee earnestly appeals to the nation to end all internal controversies in this hour of grave crisis and to act unitedly in the cause of India's freedom.

"The Committee calls upon all Congress committees and Congressmen generally to show restraint of word and deed so that nothing may be said or done which is not in keeping with India's honour or the principles for which the Congress stands. The Committee warns Congressmen against any hasty action in the shape of civil disobedience, political strike and the like. The Committee will watch the situation and the activities of the British Government in India and will not hesitate to guide the country to take further steps whenever the necessity for this arises.

"The Committee desires to impress upon all Congressmen that the country requires perfect discipline within the Congress ranks and the consolidation of the Congress organization. The Working Committee realises that the non-violent resistance offered by the Congress in the past has been sometimes mixed with violence. The Committee desires to impress upon all Congressmen the pledges taken as early as 1921 during the Congress session at Ahmedabad and repeated on many subsequent occasions."

The Working Committee of the Moslem League also

met and it was decided :—"After careful examination of the statement of His Excellency the Viceroy, dated October 17, 1939, the Working Committee of the All-India Moslem League appreciate that His Majesty's Government have emphatically repudiated the unfounded claim of the Congress that they alone represent all India, and note with satisfaction that His Majesty's Government recognize the fact that the All-India Moslem League alone truly represents the Moslems of India and can speak on their behalf; also that the rights and interests of the minorities and other important interests concerned have been fully recognized.

"The Committee, however, feel constrained to state that the points of vital importance raised by the Moslem League in their statement dated September 18, 1939, are not precisely and categorically met. The Committee, therefore, venture to suggest that in order to secure co-operation on an equal footing, as desired by His Excellency, further clarification and discussion of those matters that are left in doubt and have not been met satisfactorily are necessary with a view to arriving at a complete understanding which alone would enable the Moslem League to co-operate in the matter which concerns not only the Moslems of India but the country at large.

"The Committee cannot wholly accept the narration of facts culminating in the Government of India Act of 1935 as given in the statement of His Excellency, but do not think it necessary to enter into a controversy regarding those inaccuracies, historic and otherwise.

"The opposition of the Moslem League is not merely to the 'details' of the plans embodied in the Act of 1935 and a reconsideration thereof, but their demand is that the entire problem of India's future Constitution should be wholly examined and revised *de novo*. The Committee reiterate

emphatically that no future plan of India's Constitution will be acceptable to the Moslem League unless it meets with their full approval.

"The Committee also considered the proposal of His Excellency the Viceroy for the establishment of a 'consultative group' but cannot at present express any opinion with regard to it until its status, constitution, powers, scope and function are fully known, but welcome further consultation regarding this matter as proposed by His Excellency in his statement.

"In view of the urgency of the matter, the Committee hereby authorize the President to take such steps as he may consider proper to get the doubts removed and secure complete clarification of His Excellency's statement, and if the President is fully satisfied, the Committee empower him to give an assurance of support and co-operation on behalf of the Moslems of India to the British Government for the purpose of the prosecution of the war."

Mr. Gandhi himself characterized the Viceroy's statement as "profoundly disappointing" while the National Liveral Federation issued a statement expressing dissatisfaction.

One by one the Congress Ministries resigned and on November 5th in a broadcast from Delhi, the Viceroy declared :—"I am not prepared to accept this failure. I propose in due course to try again in consultation with the leaders of these great political parties and the Princes to see if even now there may still be the possibility of securing unity;" and towards the end of the month the Congress Working Committee, concluding a five-day session at Allahabad, decided that they would continue to explore all means of arriving at an honourable settlement, "even though the British Government has banged the door in the face of

the Congress." It was stated that the Congress had looked upon the war crisis and the problems it raised as an essentially moral issue and had not sought to profit by it in any spirit of bargaining.

It is now interesting to recall that in December Sir Stafford Cripps paid a private visit to India and met the leaders. Addressing Press representatives at Anand Bhawan, he said the influence of groups in the House of Commons favourable to India's aspirations was growing.

In mid-December, Mr. Jinnah did not help matters by calling on Mussalmans to observe a "day of deliverance and thanksgiving—as a mark of relief that the Congress Governments have at last ceased to function," and he followed this up by making a demand for a Royal Commission "to investigate charges of oppression of Moslems in Congress-governed provinces." Regarding his "day of thanksgiving," he said it was an expression of the "very natural relief" of the Moslem minorities and a way of forcing "ears that have hitherto been deaf to listen to us."

The first event of note in 1940 was a speech given by the Viceroy to the Orient Club in Bombay in which he appealed to "the leaders of the great political parties of India to help to terminate as early as possible the present constitutional deadlock in the country." He reiterated that His Majesty's Government's objective for India was Dominion Status of the Westminster variety and added :—"I can assure you that His Majesty's Government's concern and mine is to spare no effort to reduce to the minimum the interval between the existing state of things and the achievement of Dominion Status. The offer is there. The responsibility that falls on the great political parties and their leaders is a heavy one and one of which they are, I know, fully conscious."

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, in a state-

ment issued from Wardha, admitted that the declaration "is the clearest of all the declarations hitherto made. But there are some things to be said on behalf of the Congress. For instance, His Excellency the Viceroy refers to Dominion Status of the Westminster variety. But it should be clearly understood that the Congress goal is independence, pure and simple."

The Congress Working Committee however decided that Mr. Gandhi "should seek from the Viceroy clarification of certain points" in his speech. According to the Mahatma, the pronouncement seemed to contain "the germs of a settlement honourable to both nations." In an article in the "Harijan," Mr. Gandhi said :—"I am not spoiling for a fight. I am trying to avoid it. Whatever may be true of the members of the Working Committee, I wholly endorse Mr. Subhas Bose's charge that I am eager to have a compromise with Britain if it can be had with honour. Indeed, *satyagraha* demands it. Therefore, I am in no hurry. And yet if the time comes and if I had no followers, I should be able to put up a singlehanded fight. But I have not lost faith in Britain. I like the latest pronouncement of Lord Linlithgow. There are undoubted snags in that speech, many i's have to be dotted, many t's have to be crossed. But it seems to contain the germs of a settlement honourable to both nations."

Mr. Gandhi met the Viceroy at Delhi on February 5th—Mr. Jinnah saw Lord Linlithgow the following day and according to an official statement, he "urged on His Excellency the great importance attached by the Moslem and other minorities to the safeguarding of their position in any settlement or discussions that might take place. His Excellency assured Mr. Jinnah that His Majesty's Government were fully alive to the necessity for safeguarding

legitimate interests of the minorities and that he need be under no apprehension that the importance of those interests would be lost sight of."

The Gandhi-Linlithgow discussions ended in failure but writing in the "Harijan," under the title, "The Task Before Us," Mr. Gandhi said that "there need be no disappointment among Congressmen over the failure of the negotiations between H. E. the Viceroy and myself. We met to explore the possibilities of a settlement. I had seen the germs of it in the Viceregal pronouncement in Bombay. But I discovered I was mistaken. The Viceroy's hands were tied. He was not to go beyond the four corners of the offer now before the country. Perhaps it represented too his own opinion. But nothing has been lost by our meeting. In spite of the failure we have come nearer to each other. There is a clarification of the situation. Meanwhile, we have to educate the world as to what we stand for. India cannot be one of the many Dominions, i.e., a partner in the exploitation of the non-European races of the earth. If hers is a non-violent fight, she must keep her hands clean. If India is not to be a co-sharer in the exploitation of the Africans and the degradation of our own countrymen in the Dominions, she must have her own independent status. Its content and nature must not be dictated or determined by Britain. They must be determined by ourselves; meaning the elected representatives of the nation, call such an assembly what you will. Unless British statesmen definitely concede this, they do not mean to part with power. Neither the question of defence nor of the European interests need come in the way of our making this clear declaration. Not that the important matters first mentioned do not require serious consideration and adjustment. But they will yield to just and proper treatment only when the required declaration is

made and followed up immediately by corresponding action in so far as it is possible.

"Without it, Britain's war with Germany cannot be claimed to be just, certainly not unselfish.

"What is to be done, then? Declaration of civil resistance? Not yet. I mean what I say when I ascribe sincerity to Lord Linlithgow. He is doing his best to understand us, and his duty to his superiors and his nation. With all his traditions he cannot be made to jump to our position. He cannot be hustled into it.

"Our duty is, therefore, to make him feel our strength. This we shall not do by civil resistance, but by putting our own house in order whilst we may not allow the British Government to plead the minorities and the like as a bar to right action on their part, we may not blind ourselves to the fact that these questions exist and demand solution at our hands.

"We may dismiss from our minds the impossible and utterly anti-national stand taken by Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah. We cannot dismiss the Moslem from our consideration. The same may be said about the other problems: We must educate the public mind on these, clear our own minds and know where we stand in relation to them. The Maulana Saheb tells me that Congressmen and Congress committees are not always considerate in regulating elections to popular bodies, and that local boards are not always dealing justly by all the communities. We have to be above suspicion."

Meanwhile the Congress were preparing for the Ramgarh session and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad defeated M. N. Roy by 1,854 votes to 183 in the presidential election. "The present state of suspense cannot continue longer," declared the new President in a statement, "and I can say that after the Ramgarh session the Congress must take a step forward.

That step will surely take the form of a new struggle." Replying to a question by journalists whether it would mean the launching of civil disobedience, he said—"Yes, naturally." He, however, stated that for launching such a campaign it was to a certain extent essential that a favourable atmosphere should prevail in the country. He did not think however that there was much danger of communal disturbances. He expressed the view that the settlement of the political issue was not dependent on the solution of the communal problem. While admitting that the Hindu-Moslem question could not be ignored, the Maulana stated that the problem was a domestic affair, and the struggle for the achievement of independence could not await the settlement of internal problems. In connection with the Hindu-Moslem question, he said that the Congress had never closed its doors and would always be prepared to enter into negotiations, provided a suitable atmosphere was created and "proper persons" came in to negotiate.

Mr. Gandhi in a "Harijan" article urged patience and in an interview Mr. Jinnah declared that Moslem India would "never agree to submit its future destiny, or its right in the governance of the country, or in the making of any future constitution to the hands of a tribunal of Mr. Gandhi's conception, or any other variety, nor are they prepared to accept the final arbitrament of Great Britain. We must and shall be the sole and final judges of what is best for us."

The Council of the All-India Moslem League unanimously elected Jinnah as President at its Lahore session. They put forward a series of demands. These, said Jinnah, were five in number :—

1. The League had asked the Viceroy for a clear statement on behalf of the British Government that the "present Act of 1935 would go lock, stock and barrel," and the entire

scheme of constitutional reform would be examined *de novo* "in the light of experience gained from the working of the Constitution during the last two years, and in the light of experience which might be gained in future."

It was stated that the Viceroy had said the whole scheme of the Act of 1935 would be "examined afresh."

2. That Moslems could not agree to any declaration without their consent and approval being obtained for it, nor was any interim settlement to be made under the "threat or at the behest of any other party, however strong it might be, without the previous approval of Moslems."

The Viceroy had assured them that His Majesty's Government were "fully alive to the importance of Moslems and any settlement which ignored them would be unthinkable." (This, by the way, did not satisfy Mr. Jinnah. He said the Viceroy's assurance was "unsatisfactory." This left them within the "region of consultation and counsel while Moslems demanded that they themselves should be the sole judges of their destiny.")

3. Indian, particularly Moslem, troops should not be used against any Moslem country.

4. Settlement of the Arab question.

5. This demand related to Moslem grievances in Congress-governed provinces.

In the course of his speech Jinnah declared :—"People ask me what is our goal. If you do not understand even now, then I say you will never understand what our goal is. Great Britain wants to rule India and the Moslems. We say that we will not let either the British or Mr. Gandhi rule the Moslems. We want to be free."

Thus while the Moslem League stormed against the Congress and offered no concrete suggestions towards a settlement (aggravating the situation by such acts as

"Deliverance Day" demonstrations) and the Congress still asked for a definite elucidation of Britain's war aims, the situation rapidly deteriorated till on March 1st, meeting at Patna, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution declaring the determination of the Party to unhesitatingly resort to civil disobedience as soon as the organization was considered fit enough for the purpose or "in case circumstances so shaped themselves as to precipitate a crisis." The resolution which was adopted after deliberations which lasted 15 hours declared that Britain was actuated by Imperialist motives in the war with which India could not associate herself. In order to bring about dissociation the Congress Ministries had been withdrawn and the logical conclusion of that preliminary step was the declaration of civil disobedience. The Committee hoped that all classes and communities would participate in the campaign when it was launched by Mr. Gandhi who was given sole authority to start it.

In an article in the "Harijan," Mr. Gandhi declared the time for civil disobedience "is not yet." The conditions for it, said the Mahatma, were discipline and non-violence within the Congress. "These conditions do not exist and therefore it would be suicidal to launch a campaign at the present juncture." Apathy among Congress workers in regard to the Party's constructive programme, that of spinning and the sale of *khadi*, was "proof of unbelief—Battle through such instruments is foredoomed to failure."

The principal resolution at the Congress session at Ramgarh, in mid-March, passed by a huge majority, again outlined the Congress attitude towards the war. It said :—

"This Congress, having considered the grave and critical situation resulting from the war in Europe and British policy in regard to it, approves of and endorses the

resolutions passed and the action taken on the war situation by the All-India Congress Committee and the Working Committee.

"The Congress considers the declaration, by the British Government, of India as a belligerent country, without any reference to the people of India, and the exploitation of India's resources in this war, as an affront to them, which no self-respecting and freedom-loving people can accept or tolerate.

"The recent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government in regard to India, demonstrate that Great Britain is carrying on the war fundamentally for imperialist ends and for the preservation and strengthening of her Empire, which is based on the exploitation of the people of India, as well as of other Asiatic and African countries.

"Under these circumstances, it is clear that the Congress cannot, in any way, directly or indirectly, be a party to the war which means continuance and perpetuation of this exploitation.

"The Congress, therefore, strongly disapproves of Indian troops being made to fight for Great Britain and of the drain from India of men and material for the purpose of the war. Neither the recruiting nor the money raised in India can be considered to be voluntary contributions from India. Congressmen, and those under the Congress influence, cannot help in the prosecution of the war with men, money or material.

"The Congress hereby declares again that nothing short of complete independence can be accepted by the people of India. Indian freedom cannot exist within the orbit of imperialism, and Dominion Status, or any other status within the imperial structure, is wholly inapplicable to India, is

not in keeping with the dignity of a great nation, and would bind India in many ways to British policies and economic structure.

"The people of India alone can properly shape their own constitution and determine their relations to other countries of the world, through a Constituent Assembly elected on the basis of adult suffrage.

"The Congress is further of opinion that while it will always be ready, as it ever has been, to make every effort to secure communal harmony, no permanent solution is possible except through a Constituent Assembly, where the rights of all recognized minorities will be fully protected by agreement, as far as possible, between the elected representatives of various majority and minority groups, or by arbitration if agreement is not reached on any point.

"Any alternative will lack finality. India's constitution must be based on independence, democracy and national unity, and the Congress repudiate attempts to divide India or to split up her nationhood.'

"The Congress has always aimed at a constitution where the fullest freedom and opportunities of development are guaranteed to the group and the individual, and social injustice yields place to a juster social order."

Towards the end of March the annual session of the All-India Moslem League was held at Lahore and the division of India into "autonomous national states" to give the major nations separate homelands was to Mr. Jinnah the only solution of the problem of the country's constitutional future. He made this suggestion in his presidential address, when he declared :—"The problem in India is not of an inter--communal character but manifestly of an inter-national one, and it must be treated as such. So long as this basic and fundamental truth is not realized, any constitution that may

be built will result in disaster and will prove destructive and harmful not only to Moslems, but to the British and Hindus also. If the British Government are really in earnest and are sincere in their desire to secure the peace and happiness of the people of this sub-continent, the only course open to us all is to allow the major nations separate homelands by dividing India into 'autonomous national states.'"

Mr. Jinnah's idea thus to divide the country into Moslem India and Hindu India was approved, but neither he nor his henchmen seemed to have any adequate scheme for this breaking up of India. It was what most nationalist-minded Indians wished to avoid at all costs, being completely contrary to what they had been striving for, as it would be highly detrimental to India's future independent status.

Jinnah's suggestion called for many protests. Mr. V. D. Savarkar, President, All-India Hindu Mahasabha, declared that the objective of the Mahasabha was the consolidation of the Hindus with the ultimate goal of absolute independence for India. Hindus did not mind if Moslems considered themselves a separate race, but the proposal to divide the country could not be permitted.

A Sikh view was expressed at a meeting of the Khalsa National Party in Lahore when a resolution expressed the opinion that the plan was "fraught with the most dangerous consequences." In the opinion of the party, the resolution of the Moslem League created a situation which might mean a parting of the ways for the Sikhs and Moslems with whom the party had been co-operating in the working of provincial autonomy. The party hoped that saner counsels would prevail and a catastrophe be averted.

A statement that he had never gone to anyone as a Hindu to secure Hindu-Moslem unity as his Hinduism demanded no pacts was made by Mr. Gandhi in a

"Harijan' article entitled "My answer to Quaid-e-Azam." The article was in reply to Mr. Jinnah's question—"Why should not Mr. Gandhi come as a Hindu leader and let me meet him proudly representing the Moslems?"

"My position," said Mr. Gandhi, "is and has been clear. I am proud of being a Hindu, but I have never gone to anyone as a Hindu to secure Hindu-Moslem unity. My Hinduism demands no pacts. My support to the Khilafat was unconditional. I am no politician in the accepted sense. But whatever talks I had with Quaid-e-Azam or any other have been on behalf of the Congress which is not a Hindu organization. Can a Hindu organization have a Moslem divine as President and can its Working Committee have four Moslem members out of fifteen?

"I still maintain that there is no *swaraj* without Hindu-Moslem unity. I can never be party to the coercion of Moslems or any other minority. The constituent assembly as conceived by me is not intended to coerce anybody. Its sole sanction will be an agreed solution of communal questions. If there is no agreement, the constituent assembly will be automatically dissolved.

"The constituent assembly or anv body of elected representatives can alone have a fully representative status. The representative capacity of Congress has been and can be questioned. But who can question the sole representative capacity of the elected delegates to the constituent assembly? I cannot understand the Moslem opposition to the proposed constituent assembly. Are the opponents afraid that the Moslem League will not be elected by Moslem voters? Do they not realize that any Moslem demand made by the Moslem delegates will be irresistible?

"If the vast majority of Indian Moslems feel that they are not one nation with their Hindu and other brethren,

who will be able to resist them? But surely it is permissible to dispute the authority of 50,000 Moslems who listened to Quaid-e-Azam to represent the feelings of eight crores of Indian Moslems."

A week later in the "Harijan" Mr. Gandhi said he did not believe "that Moslems, when it comes to a matter of actual decision will ever want vivisection. Their good sense will prevent them, their self-interest will deter them and their religion will forbid the obvious suicide which partition would mean."

The two-nation theory, in his opinion, was an untruth, as the Hindus and Moslems were not two nations. "Those whom God has made one," he declared, "man will never be able to divide." He warned the Moslems of India against the "untruth" that was being propagated amongst them.

In the beginning of April came the sad news that the death had occurred in a Calcutta nursing home of Mr. C. F. Andrews. There had been no better British friend of India than Mr. Andrews who had devoted his life to the welfare of Indians in all parts of the world and the passing of this great missionary and scholar was mourned by Hindus and Moslems alike throughout the British Empire.

And so we come to the end of a phase in the story of India and the war. Into the summer of 1940 the deadlock continued; civil disobedience was postponed but the atmosphere remained tense. Few seemed to apprehend the clouds that were slowly gathering in the Far East—armaments should have been started in a huge scale in a country at that time far from any theatre of war; great armies should have been raised, but all that could only have been done with the help of a National Government.

END OF FIRST VOLUME

APPENDIX

STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE CONGRESS WORKING COMMITTEE IN REGARD TO THE WAR CRISIS AND INDIA.

THE Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the grave crisis that has developed owing to the declaration of war in Europe. The principles which should guide the nation in the event of war have been repeatedly laid down by the Congress, and only a month ago this Committee reiterated them and expressed their displeasure at the flouting of Indian opinion by the British Government in India. As a first step to disassociate themselves from this policy of the British Government, the Committee called upon the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session. Since then the British Government have declared India as a belligerent country, promulgated Ordinances, passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill, and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally, and circumscribe and limit the powers and activities of the provincial Governments. This has been done without the consent of the Indian people whose declared wishes in such matters have been deliberately ignored by the British Government. The Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments.

The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Naziism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned the aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping

away of well-established principles and recognised standards of civilised behaviour. It has seen in Fascism and Naziism the intensification of the principle of Imperialism against which the Indian people have struggled for many years. The Working Committee must therefore unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathise with those who resist it.

The Congress has further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends. Any imposed decision, or attempt to use India's resources, for purposes not approved by them, will necessarily have to be opposed by them. If co-operation is desired in a worthy cause, this cannot be obtained by compulsion and imposition, and the Committee cannot agree to the carrying out by the Indian people of orders issued by external authority. Co-operation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. The people of India have, in the recent past, faced great risks and willingly made great sacrifices to secure their own freedom and establish a free democratic State in India, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her, and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her.

The Committee are aware that the Governments of Great Britain and France have declared that they are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. But the history of the recent past is full of examples showing the constant divergence between the

spoken word, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives. During the war of 1914-18, the declared war aims were the preservation of democracy, self-determination, and the freedom of small nations, and yet the very governments which solemnly proclaimed these aims entered into secret treaties embodying imperialist designs for the carving up of the Ottoman Empire. While stating that they did not want any acquisition of territory, the victorious Powers added largely to their colonial domains. The present European war itself signifies the abject failure of the Treaty of Versailles and of its makers, who broke their pledged word and imposed an imperialist peace on the defeated nations. The one hopeful outcome of that Treaty, the League of Nations, was muzzled and strangled at the outset and later killed by its parent States.

Subsequent history has demonstrated afresh how even a seemingly fervent declaration of faith may be followed by an ignoble desertion. In Manchuria the British Government connived at aggression; in Abyssinia they acquiesced in it. In Czechoslovakia and Spain, democracy was in peril and it was deliberately betrayed, and the whole system of collective security was sabotaged by the very Powers who had previously declared their firm faith in it.

Again it is asserted that democracy is in danger and must be defended and with this statement the Committee are in entire agreement. The Committee believe that the peoples of the West are moved by this ideal and objective and for these they are prepared to make sacrifices. But again and again the ideals and sentiments of the people and of those who have sacrificed themselves in the struggle have been ignored and faith has not been kept with them.

If the War is to defend the "status quo," imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privilege, then

India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee are convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy for India or elsewhere and Imperialism and Fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference, and must guide their own policy. A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilising the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity.

The crisis that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only but of humanity and will not pass like other crises or wars leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. This crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War, and it will not be finally resolved till these conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium established. That equilibrium can only be based on the ending of the domination and exploitation of one country by another and on a reorganisation of economic relations on a juster basis for the common good of all. India is the crux

of the problem, for India has been the outstanding example of modern imperialism and no refashioning of the world can succeed which ignores this vital problem. With her vast resources she must play an important part in any scheme of world reorganisation. But she can only do so as a free nation whose energies have been released to work for this great end. Freedom to-day is indivisible and every attempt to retain imperialist domination in any part of the world will lead inevitably to fresh disaster.

The Working Committee have noted that many Rulers of Indian States have offered their services and resources and expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. If they must make their professions in favour of democracy abroad, the Committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own States in which to-day undiluted autocracy reigns supreme. The British Government in India is more responsible for this autocracy than even the Rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year. This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world order for which Great Britain claims to be fighting in Europe.

As the Working Committee view past events in Europe, Africa and Asia, and more particularly past and present occurrences in India, they fail to find any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government are being, or are going to be, acted upon. The true measure of democracy is the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike and the aggression that has accompanied them in the past and the present. Only on that basis can a new order be built up. In the struggle for that new world order, the Committee are eager and desirous to help in every way. But

the Committee cannot associate themselves or offer any co-operation in a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate imperialism in India and elsewhere.

In view, however, of the gravity of the occasion and the fact that the pace of events during the last few days has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the Committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and in the future. But the decision cannot long be delayed as India is being committed from day to day to a policy to which she is not a party and of which she disapproves.

The Working Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged; in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people? A clear declaration about the future, pledging the Government to the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike, will be welcomed by the people of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it, to the largest possible extent, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. The real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action to-day and give shape to the future.

War has broken out in Europe and the prospect is terrible to contemplate. But war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during recent years in Abyssinia, Spain

and China. Innumerable innocent men, women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities, cold-blooded massacres, torture and utmost humiliation have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world and, unless checked and ended, will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages. That horror has to be checked in Europe and China, but it will not end till its root causes of Fascism and Imperialism are removed. To that end the Working Committee are prepared to give their co-operation. But it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation.

The Working Committee wish to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people. But they have a deep-rooted quarrel with systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to a victory of one people over another or to a dictated peace, but to a victory of real democracy for all the people of all countries and a world freed from the nightmare of violence and imperialist oppression.

The Committee earnestly appeal to the Indian people to end all internal conflict and controversy and in this grave hour of peril, to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world.

MAIN POINTS IN VICEROY'S STATEMENT

THE essential matters on which a clarification of the position is beyond any question desired are :—

First, what are the objectives of His Majesty's Govern-

ment in the war? To what extent are they of such a character that India with her long history and great traditions can, with a clear conscience, associate herself with them?'

Second, what is the future that is contemplated in the constitutional sphere for the Indian continent? What are the intentions of His Majesty's Government? Is it possible to define those intentions more precisely and in such a manner as to leave the world in no doubt as to the ultimate status envisaged for India, as far as the British Commonwealth is concerned?

Third, in what way can the desire of India and of Indian public opinion for a closer association, and an effective association, with the prosecution of the war best be satisfied?

Let me deal with these questions in the order in which I have stated them. Let me in the first place consider to what extent in existing conditions, and at this stage in the development of the campaign in which we are engaged, any positive and satisfactory answer admits of being given to the demand for a more precise definition of our objectives.

In endeavouring to answer that question I do not propose to touch on the question of our objectives for India. That is a matter which I will deal with separately in answering the second question which I have mentioned above.

His Majesty's Government have not themselves yet defined with any ultimate precision their detailed objectives in the prosecution of the war. It is obvious that such a definition can come only at a later stage in the campaign, and that when it does come, it cannot be a statement of the aims of any single Ally. There may be many changes in the world position and in the situation that confronts us before the war comes to an end, and much must depend on the circumstances in which it does come to an end, and on the intervening course of the campaign.

The experience of all history shows in these circumstances the unwisdom and the impracticability of precise definition at so early a stage as that which we have now reached. But the fact that, for the reasons, I have given, precise definition is not practicable does not mean, as I see it, that there is any real doubt, or any uncertainty, in the minds of the public whether in India or in the United Kingdom or in any Allied country, as to the motives which have actuated us in entering into the war, and, consequently, the broad general objectives which we have before us in the campaign which is now being waged.

We are fighting to resist aggression, whether directed against ourselves or others.

Our general aims have been stated by the Prime Minister within the last few days as follows :—

"We are seeking no material advantage for ourselves. We are not aiming only at victory, but beyond it to laying the foundation of a better international system, which will mean that war is not to be the inevitable lot of each succeeding generation.

"We, like all the peoples of Europe, long for peace : but it must be a real and settled peace, not an uneasy truce interrupted by constant alarms and threats."

This statement, I think, clearly establishes the nature of the cause for which we are fighting, and justifies, if justification is needed, the extension by India of her moral support and her goodwill to the prosecution of that cause.

Let me turn now to the second question which has been put to me—the question of India's future and of the lines of her consitutional development. That is a question, I am certain in the light of my conversations, is of the greatest and most acute interest to all parties and all sections of opinion in this country. As matters stand to-day, the

constitutional position of India and the policy of His Majesty's Government are governed by the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. Part III of that Act, which provides for the conferment of provincial autonomy on the Provinces of British India, has been implemented.

For nearly 2½ years now the Provinces have been conducting their own affairs under the scheme of the Act. That they have done so, on the whole, with great success, even if now and then difficulties have arisen, no one can question. Whatever the political party in power in those Provinces all can look with satisfaction on a distinguished record of public achievement during the last 2½ years.

The experience that they have had has shown beyond any question that whatever minor problems the application of the scheme of the Act may have presented, whatever difficulties may have confronted us in the operation of the Act from time to time in the Provincial sphere, the scheme of the Act is essentially sound, and that it transfers great power and gives great opportunities to popularly elected Governments dependent on the support of a majority in their Legislatures.

The second stage contemplated by the Act was the reconstitution of the Central Government on such a basis as to achieve the essential goal of Indian unity. The method contemplated for that purpose was the achievement of a Federation of all-India, in which the representatives of all political parties in British India would together with the Rulers of the Indian States, form a unified Government of India as a whole.

I am only too conscious of the severity of the criticisms that have been advanced from many different points of view against the Federal scheme and against the arrangements embodied in Part II of the Act.

I will say to-day no more than that, having myself had so close a familiarity not only with the framing of the provisions, but with the preliminary work which has been done with a view to putting them into force. I have throughout believed that the Federal scheme in its operation would have turned out as satisfactorily as, broadly speaking, we can all of us regard the scheme of Provincial Autonomy as having turned out. I will not dilate on that subject to-day. for our work in connection with the Federal scheme has been suspended.

But in reaffirming, as I do, my belief in the essential soundness of the Federal aspects of the Act of 1935, I do so with the greater emphasis because of the evidence which the Federal provisions of the Act constitute, of the anxiety of His Majesty's Government to achieve, with the minimum of delay, and on the basis which appears to represent the greatest amount of agreement between the various parties and interests affected, the unity of India, and to advance beyond a further and a most important milestone on the road to India's goal.

Such being the background against which we are working, what are the intentions and aims of His Majesty's Government in relation to India? I cannot do better in reply to that question than to refer to the statement made on behalf of His Majesty's Government, and with their full authority, by the late Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons on February 6, 1935.

That statement makes the position clear beyond a shadow of doubt. It refers to the pledge given in the Preamble of the Act of 1919, and it makes it clear that it was no part of the plan of His Majesty's Government to repeal that pledge.

It confirms equally the interpretation placed in 1929 by

Lord Irwin, as Viceroy, again on the authority of the Government of the day, on that Preamble, that "the natural issue of India's progress as there contemplated is the attainment of Dominion status."

I need not dilate on the words of that statement. They are clear and positive. They are enshrined in the parliamentary record. They stand as a definite and categorical exposition of the policy of His Majesty's Government of the day and of their intentions to-day to this end, the future constitutional development and position of India.

I would add only that the Instrument of Instructions issued to me as Governor-General by His Majesty the King-Emperor in May 1937 lays upon me as Governor-General a direction so to exercise the trust which His Majesty has reposed in me 'that the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within our Empire may be furthered to the end that India may attain its due place among our dominions.'

That is the policy and that is the position. Those are the intentions of His Majesty's Government.

Let me go on to say another word about the Act of 1935. That Act was based on the greatest measure of common agreement which it was possible to obtain at the time when it was framed. It was based, as is well known to all of us, on the common labours of British and Indian statesmen, and of representatives of British India, as well as of the Indian States over a long period of years.

All parties were at one stage or other closely associated with those deliberations. And I can speak from personal experience when I bear tribute to the extreme anxiety of all those of us on whom, in the Joint Select Committee, there fell the more particular responsibility for devising proposals for the consideration of Parliament, to ensure that the fullest

account had been taken of all interests; of the views of all political parties; and that nothing had been left undone to ensure that the outcome of our labours reflected the greatest measure of agreement practicable in the conditions that confronted us.

Be that as it may, His Majesty's Government recognize that when the time comes to resume consideration of the plan for the future Federal Government of India, and of the plan destined to give effect to the assurances given in Parliament by the late Secretary of State, to which I have just referred, it will be necessary to reconsider in the light of the then circumstances to what extent the details of the plan embodied in the Act of 1935 remain appropriate.

And I am authorized now by His Majesty's Government to say that at the end of the war they will be very willing to enter into consultation with representatives of the several communities, parties, and interests, in India, and with the Indian Princes, with a view to securing their aid and co-operation in the framing of such modifications as may seem desirable.

I have I trust in what I have just said, made clear that the intention and the anxiety of His Majesty's Government is, as stated in the Instrument of Instructions to the Governor-General, to further the partnership between India and the United Kingdom within the Empire to the end that India may attain her due place among the great dominions.

The scheme of Government embodied in the Act of 1935 was designed as an essential stage in that process. But I have made clear in what I have just said that His Majesty's Government will, at the end of the war, be prepared to regard the scheme of the Act as open to modification in the light of Indian views, and I would make it clear, too, that it will be their object as at all times in the past it has been,

to spare no pains to further agreement by any means in their power in the hope of contributing to ordered and harmonious progress of India towards her goal.

Let me in that connection add that in the conversations I have had, representatives of the minorities have urged most strongly on me the necessity of a clear assurance that full weight would be given to their views and to their interests in any modifications that may be contemplated. On that I need say no more than that, over more than a decade at the three Round Table Conferences, and at the Joint Select Committee, His Majesty's Government consulted with and had the assistance of the advice of representatives of all parties and all interests in this country.

It is unthinkable that we should now proceed to plan afresh, or to modify in any respect, any important part of India's future constitution without again taking counsel with those who have in the recent past been so closely associated in a like task with His Majesty's Government and with Parliament.

That some even more extensive scheme than I have mentioned, some even more widely phrased indications of His Majesty's Government, is desired in certain quarters in this country, I am fully aware from the conversations I have had during these last few weeks. That that is a desire held with sincerity and that those who hold it are convinced that it is in the manner in question that the future progress and development of India and the expressed intentions of His Majesty's Government can best be fulfilled, I fully and readily accept.

I would utter one word only of caution. And if I say that the situation must be faced in terms of world politics and of political realities in this country, I do so from no lack of sympathy and no lack of appreciation of the motives

that weigh with the people of India and the ideals that appeal to them. But I would urge that it is essential in matters of this nature, affecting the future of tens of millions of people, affecting the relations of the great communities, affecting the Princes of India, affecting the immense commercial and industrial enterprises, whether Indian or European in this country, that the largest measure of agreement practicable should be achieved. With the best will in the world, progress must be conditioned by practical considerations. I am convinced myself if I may say so with the utmost emphasis, that having regard to the extent of agreement which in fact exists in the constitutional field, and on this most difficult and important question of the nature of the arrangements to be made for expediting and facilitating the attainment by India of her full status, there is nothing to be gained by phrases which widely and generally expressed, contemplate a state of things which is unlikely to stand at the present point of political development the test of practical application, or to result in that unified effort by all parties and all communities in India on the basis of which alone India can hope to go forward as one and to occupy the place to which her history and her destinies entitle her. I would ask that these words of caution be not taken as indicating any lack of sympathy on the part of His Majesty's Government for the aspirations of India, or any indifference to the pace of her advance : and I would repeat that His Majesty's Government are but concerned to use their best endeavours, now as in the past, to bring about that measure of agreement and understanding between all parties and all interests in this country which is so essential a condition of progress towards India's goal.

I turn now to the arrangements to be made to secure the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of

the war. India's contribution has already been great, great to a degree which has impressed the imagination of the world. At the head of the list I would put the contribution which India has made in spiritual—not in material terms—the support of her peoples for a cause which they can regard as, a good and a righteous cause. In the material field equally her contribution is already most significant and may be greater still. And in the circumstances the desire, the anxiety of the public opinion in India to be associated with the conduct of the war is naturally one with which I personally have throughout felt the greatest sympathy. In the circumstances I have described the desirability of steps to ensure that leaders of public opinion should be in the closest touch with developments is of the first importance.

I have discussed with the utmost frankness with the leaders of the various parties who have been good enough to come to see me in connection with the constitutional position by what machinery we could best give effect to this desire. We have examined a variety of experiments, and there has been no hesitation on the part of any of us in assessing the advantages and the disadvantages presented by each of them. I do not propose to-day to examine those various alternatives in particular detail. I will only say that in the light of my conversations and of the views (by no means always in accord), of representatives of the great parties and of the Princes I am of opinion that the right solution would be the establishment of a consultative group, representative of all major political parties in British India and of the Indian Princes, over which the Governor-General would himself preside, which would be summoned at his invitation, and which would have as its object the association of public opinion in India with the conduct of the war and with questions relating to war activities.

This group, for practical reasons, would inevitably be limited in size. But His Majesty's Government contemplate that it should be fully representative, and in particular that its personnel should be drawn by the Governor-General from panels prepared by the various major political parties, from which a selection of individuals to attend meetings of the group would be made by the Governor-General.

I hope in the very near future to enter into consultation with political leaders and with the Princes on this question. I have no doubt whatever that an arrangement of this nature will most materially contribute to associating the Indian States and British India with the steps which are being taken for the prosecution of the war and with the arrangements that are being made in that connection : and I am confident, too, that in an association of this nature of representatives of all parties and all interests there lies the germ of that fuller and broader association of all points of view in this country which contain in it the seeds of such advantage for the future of India as a whole.

When I spoke to the Central Legislature a month ago, I made an appeal for unity. I would repeat that appeal today. It is my earnest hope that the explanations I have given will have contributed materially to the removal of misunderstandings. Even if on certain points I have not, to my knowledge, been able to give assurances so comprehensive as those which would I know have been welcomed in certain political quarters in India, I would urge insistently that this is not a moment at which to risk the splitting of the unity of India on the rock of particular phrases, and I would press that we should continue to aim at the unity of India even if differences of greater or less significance continue to exist. We live in difficult and anxious days. Great ideals are in issue. Dangers real and imminent face our civilization.

Those dangers are as imminent in the case of India as of any other member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. Those ideals are as precious to India as to any country in the Empire or in the world. At this grave moment in the destinies of nations, my prayer to all parties would be not to dissociate themselves from the common effort, but to lend their co-operation and their assistance in the prosecution of the war. There could be no more decisive proof of India's fidelity to her best traditions than the full use of the opportunities afforded to her by the war for concerted endeavour. The ideals we have set before us, the objects to secure which we are engaged in the present struggle, are such as to command widespread sympathy and widespread support in India. They are in harmony with her past history and her highest traditions. It is my hope that in the grave juncture which we face India will go forward as a united country in support of a common cause.

PRINCIPAL WAR DATES

1939

SEPT.

1——Germany invades Poland.

3——Britain and France declare war on Germany.

12——British troops land in France.

17——Polish Government Flees.
Russia marches into E. Poland.

27——Warsaw surrenders.

NOV.

30——Start of Russo-Finnish War

DEC.

13——Battle of River Plate.

1940

MARCH

12——Russo-Finnish Peace signed

APRIL

9——Germany invades Denmark and Norway.

15——British land in Norway.

MAY

10——Germany invades Holland, Belgium and Luxemburg.
British and French troops enter Belgium.
Chamberlain resigns; Churchill becomes Prime Minister.

15——Holland surrenders.

28——Belgium surrenders.

JUNE

3——Dunkirk Evacuation completed.

10——Italy enters War.

14——Germans enter Paris.

16——Reynaud Cabinet resigns.
Attempt to form Franco-British Union.

17——Pe'tain forms Cabinet.
Fall of France.

INDEX